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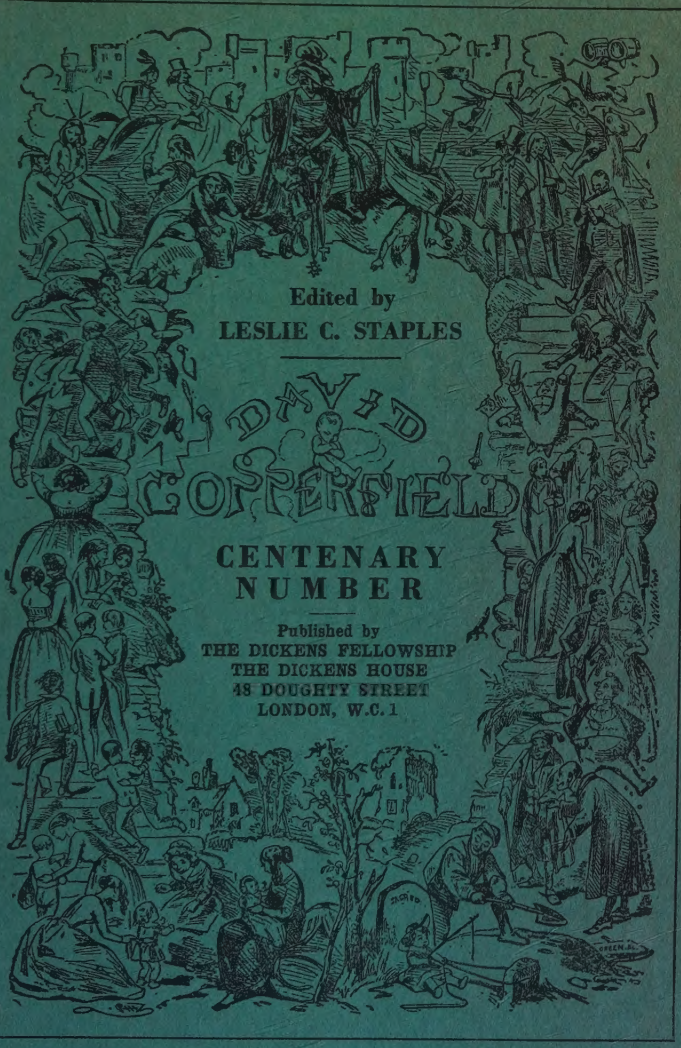
# THE DICKENSIAN

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1836 . . . the dawn of an epoch. The Hanoverian Period, with its background of plot and intrigue, was drawing to a close; in London a girl who was to be Queen and Empress was still close-guarded at Kensington Palace. But the railway, herald of the industrial revolution, had already arrived and, in 1836, the Westminster Bank was founded to provide the banking service which the new era required and from that date onwards the Bank has continued to serve the needs of both industry and the individual.

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CHARLES DICKENS

from a photograph by Henri Claudet taken about the time of the writing of *David Copperfield*

# THE DICKENSIAN

*David Copperfield* Centenary Number

VOL. XLV. 1ST JUNE, 1949 No. 291

**Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is David Copperfield.**

**Charles Dickens**

## IN SHORT . . . TURNS UP

**A Hundred Years After.** In May 1849 appeared the first instalment of *David Copperfield*. The story continued month by month until November 1850, when the final number, a double one appeared. In the century that has passed since the book's first publication, Dickens's opinion of it, quoted above from the Preface to the "Charles Dickens" edition, has been endorsed by the great majority of his readers, and the present number of *The Dickensian* is dedicated to the celebration of the completion of that century.

* * * * *

**Our Contributors.** It is with pride that we present a series of articles on the centenary specially written for *The Dickensian* by a number of the most distinguished writers of the day. George Bernard Shaw sends a characteristic message that will be read with great interest. The contribution of our Past President, Horace Annesley Vachell, the playwright and prolific novelist, is extremely welcome. Angela Thirkell, the well-known writer of many charmingly written novels, sends an article in which her love of Dickens appears in every sentence. Bernard Darwin, whose apt allusions to Dickens's books and characters make his work so attractive, contributes another. W. J. Carlton, the author of the valuable *Charles Dickens, Shorthand Writer*, has devoted a lifetime to the study of Dickens's early life, and Robert Hamilton, who has already contributed an article on his present theme to *The Dickensian*, is the author of a brilliant book on W. H. Hudson. An especial welcome will be accorded to Sir John Shuckburgh and no introduction is needed to our regular contributors, F. A. Gibson, T. W. Hill and J. H. McNulty.

* * * * *

**Illustration.** The familiar cover of *The Dickensian* is intended to recall the green wrappers of the monthly numbers familiar to Dickens's original readers. For this issue the design by Phiz for the *Copperfield* parts has been adapted for our purpose. The frontispiece is from a Daguerreotype of Dickens taken about the time he was writing *David Copperfield*. There are many portraits representing him in his early career as an author, from about 1833 to about 1840, and during his later years from about 1859 till his death he was photographed many times, but of portraits between those two periods there are very few. Our frontispiece is the best of the Copperfield period.

**Centenary Exhibitions.** Two interesting exhibitions in connection with the centenary are being held in London. That at the Victoria and Albert Museum contains the MS. of the novel with the author's notes, some of which are reproduced in this number, the original corrected proofs, one of which is also reproduced on another page, a first edition, portraits, Dickens's writing slope and other mementos. The second collection is on view at the Dickens House. This includes the dedication copy inscribed by Dickens to the Hon. Richard and Mrs. Watson, lent by Sir Michael Culme Seymour, Bt., of Rockingham Castle, who has also lent portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and a superb set of the original monthly parts, lent by Major Philip Charles Dickens, a grandson of the novelist. An interesting letter of Dickens, referring to one of his public readings from *David Copperfield*, has been lent by Walter T. Spencer, and another mentioning both *Pickwick* and *David Copperfield*, lent by Frank S. Johnson. There is in addition a selection of English and foreign editions, illustrations, portraits and other exhibits connected with the book.

* * * * *

**The Dedication Copy.** We are greatly indebted to Sir Michael Culme Seymour for the loan of this precious volume. The printed dedication in the first edition reads :

*Affectionately inscribed to*
*The Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Watson*
*of Rockingham, Northamptonshire.*

Beneath those lines in this copy Dickens wrote :

*as a token of regard and friendship*
*Fourth December* 1850 *Charles Dickens*

In a letter written from Devonshire Terrace on November 23rd, 1850, Dickens wrote to Mrs. Watson : " I have been waiting to send you *Copperfield* in a new waistcoat. His tailor is so slow that it has not yet appeared : but when the resplendent garment comes home it shall be forwarded."

Normally the volume is preserved at Mrs. Watson's home, Rockingham Castle, Dickens's visits to which gave rise to the descriptions of Chesney Wold in *Bleak House*.

* * * * *

**Dickens's Number Plans.** Another contributor of distinction to whom a special welcome is extended is Professor John Butt, of Durham University, Editor of *The Review of English Studies*. It was to the *Durham University Journal* last year that Professor Butt contributed a most important article on " Dickens at Work," a study of the novelist's methods in writing for serial publication. In our last number we published an article from his pen on the conclusion of *Great Expectations* and in this issue appears an introductory article on the " number plans " preserved with the MSS. at South Kensington, with special reference to *David Copperfield*. It is with considerable pride that we announce further articles from Professor Butt on this interesting and hitherto neglected subject.

* * * * *

**Roman Baths.** *David Copperfield* has of late had its name linked with Roman baths. The bath in Strand Lane where David used to plunge, is in course of restoration and will be re-opened to the public this year it is hoped, although whether or no its origin is Roman is now open to doubt. And at Canterbury the site of the bombed Fountain Hotel, the " County Hotel " of the novel and one frequently used by Dickens himself, has been excavated to reveal the extensive remains of the Roman baths of the city.

**Salem House.** The house in the Hampstead Road, which once was Wellington House Academy, a school attended for a time by the youthful Dickens and which supplied him for much of his material for the Salem House of *David Copperfield*, was due for demolition when the war broke out and, during the conflict, still further deteriorated, but it has now been restored and has every appearance of lasting another century.

* * * * *

**King Charles's Head.** On January 30th occurred the tercentenary of the execution of King Charles I and the event was commemorated by a number of services in London churches, at the site of the execution in Whitehall, at the monument at Charing Cross and at St. George's, Windsor, where the king lies buried. Is it possible, one wonders, that commemorations of the bicentenary, four months before the commencement of the publication of *David Copperfield*, gave Dickens the idea of Mr. Dick's obsession ? A search in *The Times* for 1849 failed to reveal any records of such ceremonies, but it is likely that the event did not pass entirely unnoticed.

* * * * *

**Mr. Somerset Maugham.** A series of six classic English novels has recently been published in America with introductions by Somerset Maugham. One of them is *David Copperfield* and Mr. Maugham's introduction to that novel was reprinted in the *Atlantic Monthly*. It is astonishing that a writer of the calibre of Mr. Maugham, finds little more to say with reference to *David Copperfield*, than a lengthy repetition of the unfounded scandals which have disfigured recent biographies of Dickens. When later, large portions of the introduction were reprinted in the *Daily Express*, the editor of that journal failed to print protests which were sent to him. It is a sad comment on modern journalism that scandalous gossip about a great national figure finds immediate welcome in the press but there is little for the cause of equity and decency.

* * * * *

**Hard Times.** A thoughtful essay on the somewhat neglected *Hard Times* appears in *The Great Tradition*, by F. R. Leavis (Chatto and Windus, 12s. 6d.), which may succeed in reviving interest in a work which has never been a favourite among Dickensians. Fine as it is, the novel lacks many of those qualities which endear Dickens's other books to his readers. Yet Mr. Leavis is not correct in his assertion that it has received no recognition : Ruskin gave it the highest place among Dickens's works and Bernard Shaw has written a full length introduction to the book.

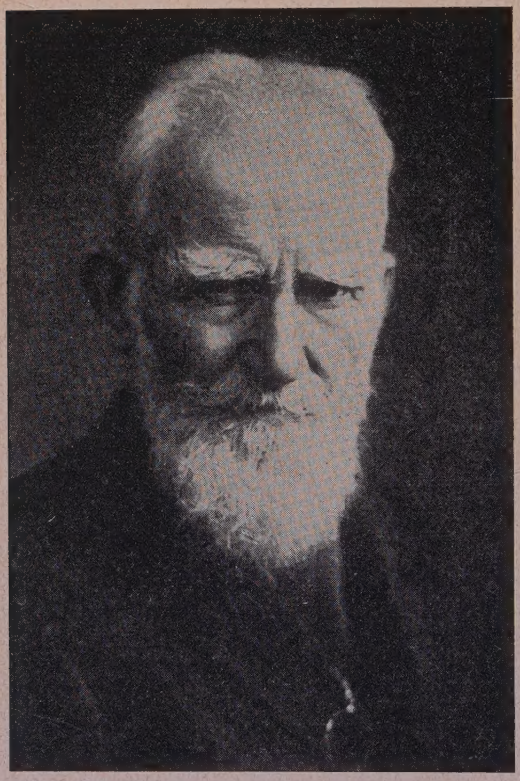
* * * * *

**Fagin in Berlin.** The experiences of Fagin in the cinemas of Berlin, and indeed in some American ones too, appear to belong to the political sphere and therefore need not be discussed here. Dickens, of course, experienced difficulties with the character in his own day, as readers of his correspondence with Mrs. Eliza Davis are aware. The matter was aptly summed up recently by the popular cartoonist *Low*, who depicted a film magnate bewildered by the task of giving Fagin a nationality other than that given him by Dickens. The difficulty was solved by the decision to make him a Martian.

LESLIE C. STAPLES.

# GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
## ON
# *DAVID COPPERFIELD*

*David Copperfield*, once Dickens's pet book, was wiped out by *Great Expectations*, much as Dora was wiped out by Flora, and Little Em'ly left as dead as a door-nail.



*Elliot & Fry*].

Note that though Dickens always insisted rightly that there are villains in the world(Murdstones and Carkers and Blandoises) there is no villain in *Great Expectations*. The convict is redeemed like Victor Hugo's criminal in *Les Miserables*. And the Agnes Wickfields and Esther Summersons give place to a quite new and unDickensish Estella, not yet identified, whom he must have met after his separation from his wife.

There is a lot more to be said about David ; but I have no time to say it.

G. B. S.
5.1.49.

AYOT SAINT LAWRENCE,
WELWYN, HERTS.

Portrait from *Bernard Shaw through the Camera*, lent by B. & H. White Publications Ltd.

# ANGELA THIRKELL

## DAVID COPPERFIELD RECONSIDERED

WHEN one is honoured by a request to write upon one of the greatest men in English literature by the society which bears his name and includes his direct descendants, one's immediate and natural impulse is to make the first excuse that comes into one's head and leave the country; for what is there left to say about *David Copperfield*, about the greatest book that Dickens wrote (except that one can never decide between it and *Great Expectations*)? But on thinking the matter over I decided, more or less in the words of another very great Englishman (though whether either of these writers would have taken any interest in the other, one would very much like to know) that it was not for me to bandy civilities with the Dickens Fellowship. And having made this decision, the obvious duty before me was to re-read *David Copperfield* for possibly the ninety-ninth time; not only as a preliminary exercise before writing about it, but for the sheer joy of finding, as one does with almost everything Dickens wrote, fresh treasures on each visit. But one obstacle loomed before me and this is an obstacle which for me is insurmountable. I can never again read parts of the earlier chapters, after Mr. Murdstone has brought his "beautiful black hair and whiskers" to Blunderstone Rookery. When one is young tales of cruelty and oppression do not seriously disturb one; at least this is my remembrance of an omnivorous or rather omnilegerous childhood. They are all part of the general fun and excitement of the book and I remember the zeal with which when very young I used to search for horrors. I do not think that to a child who has a happy home tales of unkindness to other children mean very much. They are like the other giants and ogres and wicked enchanters who are the joy of the nursery and as they are not within one's experience one sees them as it were in the flat and does not pay much attention to them. But as one gets older and sees for oneself, or even feels for oneself, "all the oppressions that are done beneath the sun," the reading of these things becomes increasingly painful, and to read of unhappiness in children; terrible because they submit to it and see no end and cannot understand; terrible because nothing has prepared them for it; terrible because the mark may be left in them for life; as one gets older and has children and grand-children of one's own this reading becomes unbearable, or so I have found it. There are moments when I almost decide to paste together some of the pages of *David Copperfield* lest I should see them even by mistake. I have not yet gone so far, but there are pages that I will never willingly read again.

Now, having made this confession, may I go on to speak of *David Copperfield* as in some ways a portrait of Dickens himself. There is no need to go into the details of his life. We all know them almost by heart from Forster's *Life*, from G. K. Chesterton's short but deeply understanding book on him, from other writers, even to some degree from a recent contribution which though giving, we fully believe, a distorted view of Dickens has the merit of most industrious collecting of facts, though the inferences drawn from the facts are often to be deprecated.

But while reading *David Copperfield* again, the book that Dickens

himself called his " favourite child," I wondered, for the first time, whether there were not in this book that he " liked the best " a touching almost unconscious confession of failure in his own life. As David tells his own story, nothing extenuated and naught set down in malice, we see, developed with the consummate skill that often disguises itself as simplicity, a character which, naturally sweet and loving, is strengthened by adversity and by the uses to which puts it that adversity. David marries Dora with " the first mistaken impulse of an undisciplined heart." David's description of their married life with a wife who cannot keep house and will never learn, who is wholly adorable but will never be anything more than the " child-wife " that she begs him to call her, a marriage in which he at last quietly resigns himself to " adapt myself to Dora ; to share with her what I could and be happy ; to bear on my own shoulders what I must and still be happy. This was the discipline to which I tried to bring my heart, when I began to think," this description brings one very near to tears. There is in it an exquisite, melancholy, yet not weak sense of the vanity of human wishes ; but where some would give up the struggle and become hard or uncaring, David takes his burden and his responsibilities in silence and makes the child-wife so happy during her too brief life that her happiness is reflected upon him and makes up for much that he has missed. Could David's creator have doné as David did ? Or is this beautiful and touching picture of a heart subdued to fine purposes the confession of a man who, with all his greatness, " saw and approved better things, but followed worse " ?

This is perhaps irrelevant to the book itself, but in so far as David Copperfield and Charles Dickens are one, we may perhaps be allowed to believe that Dickens drew what he might have been and that in his favourite child he saw himself as happier circumstances and better understanding might have made him. Of this no one can speak with certainty, nor does one wish to explore too closely the secrets of a man who gave himself and his labours with such full hands to us for ever ; but at any rate David himself will remain as the most understanding, noble, delicate picture of what love, disciplined, may do to lift a man nearer the gods.

I think when we first read Dickens we are inclined to find Dora rather a nuisance. Equally, I regret to say, we are inclined to find Agnes rather a bore, a prig. We believe that she was all her creator says, but our faith is in Dickens, not in Agnes. As, in the words of my grandmother who lived to a great age, I grow older and less wise, I come to love Dora more and more, even for her folly. As a housekeeper she was a complete failure and made her young husband's life doubly difficult ; she was frivolous, unwilling to learn or even attempt anything new or difficult, provokingly incapable ; in fact everything that a wife should not be. But her love for her husband is a shining fixed star and by sheer power of loving her place is secure. After David has looked back upon his short married life and described its thousand difficulties and the decision he made to take every burden upon himself ; when he remembers Mrs. Strong's words : " there can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose," there follow these four words : I always loved her. A woman was once forgiven because she loved greatly. Dora loved with the whole strength of her being and no one can do more ; and she was greatly loved.

When we come to Agnes I must confess that it has taken about half a century—for I began to read very early and omnivorously—for me to see Agnes as Dickens saw her. I fear that for a long time my feelings about her were much the same as those of Mr. Chuckster about Kit, whom that gentleman so rightly characterised as Young Snobby.

She has this in common with Esther in *Bleak House*, that their creator was so fond of them that he almost sets us against them. And here may I divagate on the subject of illustrations to novels. All my Dickens reading for many years was done in unillustrated editions and not till comparatively late in life did I get hold of some of the original novels illustrated by Phiz. These illustrations are being reproduced in the complete Dickens which the Oxford University Press is bringing out as paper allows, but though it is good that this should be done, they cannot but lose on unsuitable paper, and are inevitably less sharp than the originals. To get copies of the original editions and study the illustrations is a real help to understanding Dickens. May I give two instances. One is *Bleak House*, where the Esther whom I had always rather contemptuously looked upon as a humourless prig is shown as her creator made her ; so lovely a creature that she outshines even her beautiful mother though with a milder light and made me realise, as even Dickens had not succeeded in doing, how great the danger was that the likeness to her mother might be observed. Now again, in *David Copperfield*, there are two illustrations in which Agnes appears. The first is not particularly interesting, but the second, David and Agnes with three of their children sitting by the fire when Peggotty comes to see them, made me realise how very much nicer and more living Agnes was than I had ever believed. This partnership between writer and illustrator was a most interesting one from the reader's point of view, as it is evident that Phiz studied the books with infinite care before making his drawings. Not only is every detail there though without cumbering the picture, but the artist has often noted things which the reader's quickly-moving eye has slurred and made Dickens's meaning as plain to us as it must have been to him. When I see Agnes as Phiz drew her I understand what she meant to Dickens ; which is greatly to my dishonour, for Dickens had put it all in print and I had eyes and saw not until the illustrator put it into black and white for me.* Even to the last this persisted and the cover-design for *Edwin Drood*, by Charles Collins, is full of such curious detail, all faithfully observed and taken from Dickens's own words, that whenever I see a reproduction I believe I am at last going to find the clue that will tell me what happened after the pen fell from the master's hand ; though alas, this has never been. So, for an even clearer understanding of *David Copperfield*, I would recommend every reader to look at the illustrations—if possible in the original large size—when he or she will probably find him or herself convicted of gross overlooking of one or other detail which means much in the development of the story.

For whatever anyone may say, I maintain that Dickens was an excellent maker of plots ; plots which by their very apparent ease and carelessness delude the reader into thinking that they are too simple or too complicated. It is by this combination of simplicity and complication that Dickens excels and his methods may well be the despair of other writers. A novelist—in a very 'umble way—may perhaps be allowed to speak from the point of view of the writer. I think that novelists may very roughly be divided into two kinds. Some are able to make a framework or plot and stick to it more or less closely. Others can only write by writing ; that is, they must have a pen or a pencil in the hand and wait angrily for some kind of inspiration to come. When it does come, whether good or bad, whether an idea of a single character or an idea of a complicated intrigue, the writer can only follow the pen, not knowing what lies a paragraph ahead and trusting almost blindly to an unseen power which for good or ill makes thoughts flow from the head, down the right arm, along the

* See *The Dickensian*, 1944, pp. 47, 83.

pencil, and so on to the paper. Some writers have left us an account of how they wrote. Some are unable to account for how they come to write. I believe—on no authority internal or external—that Miss Austen wrote without knowing what was going to happen, letting her Daemon guide her. Dickens seems to be doubly gifted, as improviser and as painstaking plot-maker.

The writer of the preface to *David Copperfield* in the new Oxford Edition says : " Of the plot of *David Copperfield*, little need be said. In fact the book can hardly be said to possess one. This may be regarded as an advantage, as the most enthusiastic admirer of Dickens cannot maintain that his plots were his forte." This appears to me to show a curious want of understanding. *Pickwick*, of course, hardly pretends to a plot. In *Oliver Twist* we shall never really know (because we do not really care) who Monks was, or who Oliver's mother. But in all Dickens's maturer, *great* novels the plot is of great intricacy, depending on a very large number of characters and incidents, winding, divagating, but never losing sight of the end of the journey. To say that *David Copperfield* has hardly any plot is to misunderstand the whole book. In *Great Expectations* Pip uses the comparison of the Eastern story where the stone falls suddenly and brings death after many years of patient preparation. So in *David Copperfield* and all the great novels each incident, however irrelevant it may seem at the time, is bound in the long chain of circumstance that brings the catastrophe for good or ill. Genius did this ; but the genius had also the infinite capacity for taking pains. I think it is hardly an idle statement to say that no incident, however apparently irrelevant, is without its bearing on the main plot sooner or later. This is perhaps most strongly marked in *Bleak House*, where one wonders how the writer could keep the threads disentangled in his head and yet weave so complex and inevitable a story in which no word could be omitted without loss. There are of course divagations which could only have occurred from sheer good spirits and joy in creation. Mr. Micawber is essential to the plot from his first appearance in Windsor Terrace, City Road, to his last appearance on the emigrant ship (for we regret that we cannot and will not believe in his avatar at Port Middlebay) ; but his letters are the sheer joy of the artist in what we might almost call abstract creation. We will admit that some of them are not absolutely essential to the unfolding of the plot ; but if Mr. Micawber had not written them he would be the less Mr. Micawber.

There are people, as we have said, who maintain that Dickens could not make or sustain a good plot. There are others, equally misguided, who maintain that he could not draw a gentleman. Whether this is important or not we need not stop to enquire ; but it appears to me to be far from true. As G. K. Chesterton so truly pointed out, Dickens has, in Eugene Wrayburn, drawn the perfect type of gentleman as far as breeding and manners go and indeed as far as a kind of easy blackguardism goes ; and in the end he justifies himself, having a good deal in common with Sidney Carton. We need only mention the name of Herbert Pocket to show the rogues they lie. And what are we to say of David Copperfield ? The word gentleman is the most difficult to define or to analyse ; and it is a word that is now grossly misused, like its sister expression " young lady," which usually means someone who is not a lady and very often not young. But if David Copperfield in his strength and his weakness, his loves, his struggles with his less good self, his gift for meeting all men as equals till they prove themselves unworthy, his steadfast affection, his willingness to serve and help, his modest unconsciousness of his own worth and, one must add, in his or his creator's irrepressible sense of fun ; if he is not a gentleman, then Dickens never writ, nor no man ever loved.

# HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

## DICKENS AS A FORTY-NINER

IT is difficult for an aged Dickensian to realise that *David Copperfield* is a centenarian. I have recorded elsewhere that I was nine years old when Dickens died in 1870. I found my mother's nursemaid in tears. I can hear her voice: "Mr. Dickens is dead." She gave me a coloured photograph of him which she was holding in her hand. A year or two later, before I adventured to Harrow, a first edition of *Pickwick Papers*—with my thumb-marks on every page—was my prized possession; and I have it still. Long afterwards, when I functioned so inadequately as President of the Fellowship, a question was put to me again and again. Did I reckon *David Copperfield* to be the outstanding masterpiece of our greatest novelist? I cannot answer such a question. Towards the close of the naughty 'nineties I was a guest at a Robert Browning Tea in San Francisco. Two young ladies, sisters, strangers to me, held a pistol to my head.

"Are you a student of Shakespeare?" asked the elder of the pair.

"M'm—I hardly dare to call myself that."

"We know you must be. Please tell us—we're students—which of the plays you place on top of the bunch."

"Frankly, I—I don't know."

"Surely you put *Hamlet* first? I do."

Her younger sister said indiscreetly:

"Edna thinks *Hamlet* to be Shakespeare's masterpiece, 'cos it's the only play of his she's read."

I have known many distinguished vintners. Some of their innumerable beneficiaries ask them to name the greatest wine. But every great wine has its season. Sir Willoughby Patterne, for example, would not have offered Dr. Middleton a noble and aged port in the dog days. A first-growth claret is a flower of the Spring; the ethers of a burgundy enchant our palates in chill October.

*Great Expectations* is a great novel. A Gallup Poll, dealing with the present demand for the novels of Dickens, might (or might not) be enlightening. I recall the sad, minatory lines of Kipling; but it is, I submit, incontestable that the "lamp" of Dickens was never "out." Alas! he died when he was fifty-eight. I ought to know (but I don't) the titles of his novels especially dear to him. Forster tells us that he read aloud with the greatest pleasure passages from his works. Did he read them and re-read them when alone? And, towards the end, could it be affirmed that he "subsisted" on their fragrance? Not for a moment do I believe that he did. His mind had too many facets. Henry James wrote long prefaces. Every young writer should read them in the edition de luxe published by Macmillan. The ordinary reader will be amazed (and perhaps amused) at the proprietary interest and pride innocently lavished on his children by their parent—! A sage—was it Leonard Courtney?—said to me, not unkindly: "These prefaces are almost obstetrical."

Something has just flickered out of a memory less retentive than it was. Forster speaks of Dickens re-reading *David Copperfield* and greatly affected by it. At the moment he was writing *Great Expectations*. Dickensians can hazard the conjecture that Dickens, as Pip took form in his mind, wished to re-read what he had written about David.

If I dared to set down my appreciation of *David Copperfield*, I should be distressingly sensible that whatever I wrote had been written much better by others. None the less, I have been vouchsafed a "twist." 1849 is *annus mirabilis* to millions in the United States. In that year gold was discovered in California. The adventurers, who

sailed round The Horn or crossed uncharted territory in "prairie schooners," entitled themselves FORTY-NINERS. I have talked with scores of these pioneers. Some suffered incredible hardships. Only the few reaped a golden harvest. To-day California is known as the Golden State; and it is still one of the richest States in the Union. Why? Not because of the precious metal taken from its creeks and hills, but for a more enduring reason. The Forty-niners who failed to find gold made California a Canaan. They developed its marvellous resources. Who was their favourite author? Charles Dickens. If you doubt this, read the lilting lines written by Bret Harte entitled *Dickens in Camp*. Dickens was indeed the "Luck" (and the Pluck) of many a roaring camp. I crossed the Rockies in 1881. Later on I owned a cattle-ranch. My cowboys were ardent Dickensians; they had never heard of Thackeray!

What I call a "twist" is this: as a writer I link together *David Copperfield* and the discovery of gold in California, admittedly a flight of fancy. Gold has its own standard; so has Literature. It may be exaggeration to affirm that Dickens established a new standard. We know that as a boy he read Fielding and Smollett, captivated by their humour. When he wrote *Pickwick Papers* he must have been aware that the popular novelists of that day dealt according to their lights with the middle and upper classes. But the blood of the Californian Forty-niners circulated in his veins. He found gold dust and nuggets in mean streets and in the humblest homes. They were his "placer diggings."

That is why I think of him as a glorious FORTY-NINER.

---

The Drawing-room at 1 Devonshire Terrace,
the home of Dickens when *David Copperfield* was written.

The columns in the foreground served Dickens as a stage proscenium for theatricals.

by Percy Home.

By courtesy of the Artist and the Misses Dingley.

# WILKINS MICAWBER

By Sir JOHN SHUCKBURGH

"AMONG the eyes elevated towards you from this portion of the globe, will ever be found, while it has light and life, the eye appertaining to Wilkins Micawber, Magistrate." Those are the concluding words of the last recorded letter of an epistolary stylist unique in history or fiction. The last recorded letter, be it noted. The emphasis is on the word "recorded"; it can hardly be supposed that it was the last letter ever penned by so supreme a master of the art of letter-writing. "Bless and save the man," said Miss Betsey Trotwood on a memorable occasion, "he'd write letters by the ream, if it was a capital offence." And no doubt he went on writing them by the ream (capital offence or no capital offence) even after his transplantation to Port Middlebay and the preoccupations of a pioneer farmer. *Colum non animum.* The habits of a lifetime are not so easily shaken off; and indeed there is positive evidence, quite apart from any *a priori* reasoning, that Mr. Micawber's ruling passion was unaffected by the Australian climate. The same local newspaper, which gave currency to the letter already quoted, bore witness that he was a "diligent and esteemed" contributor to its columns. It contained a second letter from his pen "touching a bridge," as well as an advertisement of a whole series of similar letters "shortly to be republished in a neat volume, with considerable additions." The sway of the old Adam clearly continued unabated.

It is pleasant to think of Mr. Micawber, in the late autumn of his career, still indulging his literary tastes and still expressing himself in the old inimitable idiom. His mastery of language had found a public outlet at last. Indeed all his gifts had come at length into full play. Opportunity, so long denied him, brought his talents to flower. If he had stayed in England, if (as he himself would have put it) he had never cut adrift from the "Modern Babylon," it is more than doubtful whether he would ever have found an editor to print his letters or a publisher sufficiently venturous to reproduce them in book form. It may be taken as quite certain that he would never have risen to the dignity of the magisterial bench. The impressive signature of "Wilkins Micawber, Magistrate" would never have found its way into type. The freak of fortune that sent him overseas (it was really Miss Trotwood's suggestion, but "freak of fortune" is more picturesque) made of him both the publicist and the magistrate. Whether he can ever have been a very efficient magistrate, even according to the standards of Port Middlebay, may be open to question. His qualifications have largely to be taken on trust. True, his wife had no doubts on the subject; she was always convinced that he possessed what her deceased father had been in the habit of describing as the "judicial mind." Mr. Micawber himself was more than half inclined to take the same view; in moments of optimism he could even picture himself, "in his judicial mind's eye," seated upon the proud eminence of the Woolsack. Let us leave it at that. It is really a matter of the very smallest consequence. Those who find it difficult to take Micawber seriously in his magisterial capacity should

remember in what an atmosphere of make-believe his supposititious functions were discharged. Realism hardly enters into the question at all. Port Middlebay is Port Nowhere : a sort of antipodean utopia such as never existed, or could have existed, in Australia or anywhere else. It is no more than a literary echo of a popular nineteenth-century convention that had little basis either in geography or in economics. " The Colonies," in the Victorian conception, were a convenient dumping ground for the misfits of the mother country. People who made themselves too troublesome at home were shipped off, by their long-suffering families, with the express object of " making new men of themselves " in some suitably distant clime. Once they had got there, it was tacitly assumed that, by some means or other, they would fulfil their share of the contract. At any rate, no further questions were asked ; it was enough that their relations had succeeded in getting rid of them. In practice, it is to be feared, the process seldom worked out quite as simply as all that. But there were cases, even in real life, where it proved a genuine success. Mr. Micawber's is the classical example in fiction. No one will grudge him his good fortune. A misfit he certainly was, by English measurements, but not a misfit of the ordinary kind. He could boast one counteracting quality of inestimable value. He was possessed of a resilience that was bound, in the long run, to triumph over all obstacles. No series of disappointments could shake his confidence that, sooner or later, something would turn up ; and in the end—later rather than sooner—something did turn up. It was only to be expected ; never were the demands of poetic justice (always so dear to Dickens's heart) more abundantly fulfilled.

It is always an agreeable diversion, none the less agreeable, for serving no practical purpose whatever, to compare Dickensian characters with those of Shakespeare. The comparison may fairly be made, because there is one vital respect in which the two masters stand alone and unchallenged. Each has left us a portrait gallery of truly royal magnificence and variety. No other English writer approaches their achievement, from no other pages does there emerge a procession of figures so closely woven into the texture of our national life that their very names have passed into the currency of our daily thought and speech. The two men have the field to themselves ; there is no third or fourth in the race. They wrote in different eras and at different stages in the long march of civilisation ; but human nature, in all its essentials, remains a constant factor against which the ravages of time and the progress of science can avail but little. The portraits that Shakespeare drew from his sixteenth-century contemporaries were of common substance with those conceived by Dickens nearly three hundred years later. Take a few examples at random. Compare Lady Macbeth with Madame Defarge, Shylock with Fagin, Dogberry with Mr. Bumble. The family likeness persists in the face of all changes of setting or costume. And Micawber ? We need not look far for his lineal predecessor and prototype. The jovial visage of Sir John Falstaff stares us in the face. Consider what the two had in common ; there was in both of them the same irrepressible buoyancy, the same shrewdness, the same inner sense of the proprieties (not always rising above the surface, it is true) and the same fund of sardonic humour that could appreciate a joke even when it turned against themselves. Both loved to express themselves in grandiloquent terms : not boastfully or self-assertingly, but because they found a keen relish in high language for its own exclusive sake. Micawber, we are told, spoke " with a certain condescending roll in his voice" ; it is difficult to believe that Falstaff did not do the same. It has been well said of Falstaff that, despite his cowardice, his low pleasures and his more

than questionable proceedings, he somehow never failed to conduct himself like an Elizabethan gentleman. So too with Micawber. He had his failings and shortcomings ; he was feckless and improvident almost to the point of dishonesty ; those who entered into financial transactions with him had good cause (as Traddles learned to his cost) to deplore their unwisdom ; yet, in spite of everything, the hallmark of good breeding—and it meant something in Victorian times, however out of fashion to-day—was stamped unmistakeably upon his character and conduct. There was a legend, resting (as his biographer admits) on somewhat shadowy evidence, that he had once held a commission

Wilkins Micawber by Frank Reynolds.

in the Royal Marines. Be that as it may, the *cachet* of an " officer and a gentleman " remained with him throughout life.

Micawber's conversational style was wholly original and wholly his own ; but it was not so far removed from the dialect of the fat knight as to place the theory of their consanguinity wholly out of court. Take Falstaff in one of his more sententious and less roystering veins. " Virtue," he said, " is so little regarded in these costermonger days, that true valour is turned bear herd." Or again : " It was always yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common." Allowing for some change of idiom, inevitable in the course of three centuries, Micawber might have used almost identical words. " Costermonger days " would have been wholly in character ; one can hear him roll out the phrase (it would have been

in keeping with his usual "indescribable air of doing something genteel") as he ladled out the punch to his admiring guests. As to the foibles of the English nation, he and Falstaff were very much of a mind. "My dear," he said to his wife on the eve of their migration to Australia, "Britannia must take her chance": she had not, he considered, laid him under such a "load of public obligation" as to make him "at all sensitive as to the formation of another connection." In fact, both he and Sir John laboured under a similar grievance: a grievance none the less acute because, in both cases, it was humourously felt and expressed. Both were persuaded that, whatever the reason might be, their countrymen had failed to rate them at their true value.

Above all else, the two characters had this in common. Both—to put the point in the fewest possible words—were drawn by a loving hand. Neither author turned a blind eye to the faults of his creature, neither sought to delude the world with a presentation of human perfection or human infallibility. Far from it. But both were moved by a generous sympathy that knew how to deal tenderly with backslidings and to give their full due to compensatory virtues. The origin of Falstaff is obscure, but in the case of Micawber we are better informed. We know that Dickens was drawing, in large measure, upon memories of his own father. In a sense the portrait, for all its whimsical features, was an act of filial piety. It was the product of natural affection tempered by an overpowering sense of the ridiculous, of ridicule held in check by the most ingrained and enduring of all human sentiments. Love and laughter: surely a pair of progenitors upon which the most exacting of eugenists could scarcely improve. Of that mixed parentage was Wilkins Micawber brought to birth; small wonder that he has won a place among the most lovable characters in English literature.

**Peggotty's Boathouse.**

By Fred Barnard.

# THE DICKENS HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND

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# DICKENS'S NOTES FOR HIS SERIAL PARTS

By JOHN BUTT

THE SEARCH FOR EVERY TITTLE OF EVIDENCE bearing upon the end of *The Mysteries of Edwin Drood* led students long ago to examine the notes Dickens drew up for his guidance in writing that novel.* It is not generally recognised that similar notes for many other novels exist, bound up like the *Drood* notes with the rest of the manuscript. In the manuscript of *Martin Chuzzlewit* there are two half-sheets of very perfunctory jottings relating to monthly parts, numbers IV (chapters IX and X) and VI (chapters XIII-XV): thereafter every novel from *Dombey and Son* to *Edwin Drood*, except for *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*,† has its full quota of notes, one page to every part.

The precise function which these notes fulfilled is difficult to determine. I cannot recollect that Dickens himself ever mentions them in his letters; and Forster, who reproduced in his *Life of Dickens* notes prepared for the first monthly parts of *Little Dorrit* and *David Copperfield* to show "in the former the labour and pains, and in the latter the lightness and confidence of handling," was either ignorant of their function or insufficiently curious about them. There is plenty of evidence about their function, but the evidence is not easy to interpret.

From *Dombey and Son* onwards these notes are uniform in appearance. A sheet of paper has been folded across the centre, thus forming two conjugate half-sheets. The left-hand half-sheet is invariably filled with general memoranda: the right-hand sheet is invariably headed by the title of the novel and the number of the monthly part, and is then sub-divided into chapters. A glance at the photograph of the notes relating to *David Copperfield*, part VII, will show that the chapter numbers and chapter titles have been written down before the succeeding notes, since Dickens has clearly left himself insufficient space between chapter XIX and chapter XX for all the jottings he wanted to make. The *Edwin Drood* notes confirm that this was his practice, for the notes for parts V and VI contain no more than the chapter numbers and chapter titles.

What did Dickens do after mapping out his memoranda sheet into chapters? We are helped in hazarding a guess by the appearance of the ink. Dickens seems to have had three sorts of ink in general use, one a blue-black, another a vivid blue, and a third which has now faded to a watery yellow. The supplies of ink appear to have been uncertain, since changes from one to another occur with baffling irregularity. But though the irregularity is puzzling in itself, the frequency of change in ink in some of the manuscripts helps the student to follow Dickens in the process of composition. Thus the supply of watery ink with which *David Copperfield* was started gave out on the eleventh leaf of Part IV, threequarters way through chapter X, and Dickens then changed over to vivid blue which lasted him until the end of Part VII: in Part VIII (chapter XXII) he reverted to the watery ink he started with. We should expect the ink with which the notes were written to keep in step with these changes if we assume that Dickens wrote the notes at the same desk at which he was writing the novel. But this does not happen. In the notes for Part IV the chapter titles of chapters XI and XII, the line "on my own account and don't like it" on the left-hand side, and the passage

* They were reproduced in *The Dickensian*, 1931, pp. 184-5, 200-1, 268-9, 284-5, 300-1, with a prefatory note by P. T. Carden. I do not entirely agree with Mr. Carden's explanation.

† I can find no satisfactory explanation for Dickens abandoning this practice in the last two of his weekly serial novels.

School. Monday
Tuesday

Thursday

Monday with a day.

Tuesday back, & Wednesday Thursday.

Thursday again.

Tuesday, & the Friday.

The afternoon
& Holidays ... attached
Tell him afternoon
name ... she is not to
they not be for long.

Begin the afternoons holiday

The holidays are connected into one afternoon

3 holidays.

## Chapter VII

## My Friend at Salem House.

...ol - His progress
Steerforth's character.
Traddles.
...Mr Sellis [illegible] and mother, and his nurse.
Visit from [illegible] Mr Peggotty? Yes. And Ham.
Summing up. A song [illegible]

## Chapter VIII.

...[illegible]

The apartments. The lady
Peggotty & his mother.
The handsomes - papers of their [illegible]
[illegible]

## Chapter IX.

I have a memorable Birthday.
...creable waits it return
His state of mind - childish incidents & [illegible]
The industrials, Mr Omer's
Steerforth's home and recollections of [illegible]
Peggotty's narrative.

close with Peggotty's mother & brother, visit from [illegible]

Who I know so well

I become my best friend and am provided for

I keep life on an even moment

I grow with life, with every moment

I make new resolutions

real History and Experience of David Copperfield. No. IV.

Chapter X...

I have neglected it, and am provided for.

I will Dispose of Barkis

Dr Dyssotts

the marriage and the two children

Death of

Jemima ... arrangements

"Dr Lord me" &c

Chapter XI.

the Murderer ... at the Workhouse

murderer and Drink

Mr and Mrs Micawber ... Divine Institution of

Chapter XII

If a man commit many a sin, ... a gen. Resolution.

The young man at the donkey cart

Mr Murdstone ... and his sister

" Neglect/Quinion.—arrangement/' Behold me ' &c " on the right-hand side are written in vivid blue ink unlike the surrounding notes, which are written in watery ink. This suggests that the passages written in vivid blue were jotted down after the supply of watery ink had temporarily failed and therefore *after* Dickens had started to compose the number. But it also suggests that the notes under the headings of chapters XI and XII were written *before* the chapters were composed. More surprising is to find the resumption of watery ink in Part VIII anticipated in the notes for Part VII. There the only jottings in vivid blue are the memoranda on the left-hand side, the three chapter numbers, and the first two chapter titles. The implication is that all the notes on the right-hand side and the last chapter title (" Little Em'ly ") were written after Dickens had finished writing the monthly part itself.

There is further evidence to support this. On the left-hand side Dickens can be seen trying out two names for Steerforth's servant : " Lirrimer ? Littimer." " Lirrimer " was his first choice ; and so the name stands, though corrected to " Littimer," on its first two occurrences in the short second paragraph of chapter XXI—" Nothing could be objected against his surname, <Lirrimer> Littimer, by which he was known. Peter might have been hanged, or Tom transported ; but <Lirrimer> Littimer was perfectly respectable." But by the time he came to write the fourth paragraph of the same chapter, Dickens was quite decided upon the name. " Littimer was in my room in the morning " needed no correction, and " Littimer " he was from that point onwards. But " Littimer " is also the form used in the notes to chapter XXI, showing that the notes for this chapter—or at least a part of them—were written after the chapter was completed.

It will be remembered that Mr. Vholes in *Bleak House* supported an aged father in the Vale of Taunton. The manuscript reveals that Dickens had originally intended him to support an aged mother : " father " is a correction in the manuscript, but it is the word " father " we find in the notes for that chapter. Similarly, a comparison of chapter titles in the notes and in the text and of passages from the text quoted in the notes shows that the version in the notes often, but not invariably, records the corrected and not the original version.

It is clear, therefore, that Dickens was not entirely consistent in his practice. Sometimes he wrote his chapter notes before the corresponding chapter was written, sometimes after. And this inconsistency in his practice seems to imply an inconsistency of purpose. For while those chapter notes which were written after the chapter was finished cannot have been intended to help him in the composition of the chapter, those which were written before the composition of the chapter they relate to may well have been intended as a rough plan of the direction the chapter was to take. The closing notes for chapters VII and IX in Part III are almost certainly notes of this kind. But that Dickens should have taken the trouble to jot down chapter notes after the chapter was written suggests that though he did not always need a rough plan to work by in composing his chapter, he did feel the need of a summary of the chapter afterwards. The function of this summary may have been to refresh his memory of the details of the preceding part before embarking upon the next.

The chapter notes on the right-hand side, then, seem to fill a double purpose. Sometimes they serve to rough out the direction the chapter will take and to emphasise its salient points ; but except for the last numbers, they always serve to summarise the contents and to put Dickens into the mood of the last monthly part when starting upon another.

The function of the notes on the left-hand side seems to have been

different. They are jotted down haphazardly and bear no relation to the chapter divisions on the right-hand side. Dickens is seen in the process of meditating what ingredients shall go into the number to be written. Both the form of the entries and the quality of the ink show that there were frequently two stages in this process. The questions represent the stage of indecision, and the conviction of the replies, often underlined more than once, suggest that the shape of the number was rapidly forming in his mind.

This indecision must not be read as evidence of mere opportunism, as though Dickens relied upon the inspiration of the moment for filling his monthly part. That indeed must have been his temptation in the days of *Pickwick* and *Nickleby*, and we learn from Forster that the theme of *The Old Curiosity Shop* took gradual form as he wrote it, " with less consciousness of design on his own part than I can remember in any other instance of all his career." But the Preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit* shows Dickens's consciousness of earlier indiscipline when he mentions his endeavour in that novel " to resist the temptation of the current Monthly Number, and to keep a steadier eye upon the general purpose and design." From then onwards readers could feel assured that though a Sairey Gamp or a Wilkins Micawber might wrest temporary control of the story, yet the novel was proceeding in however leisurely a fashion to some predestined end. " The whole pattern . . . is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom," he said in the Postcript to *Our Mutual Friend*; and those who are not convinced must study the novels as Mr. House has recently studied *Great Expectations*,* or must ponder the evidence of the wrapper design for the monthly parts of *Dombey and Son*. " A great deal of the story is there foreshadowed," Kitton observed long ago,† and sure enough we can detect in the panels of Phiz's design Mr. Dombey's second marriage, the collapse both of his health and of his firm, and his ultimate dependence upon Florence's loving ministrations.‡ The pattern was therefore clear enough to be revealed to Hablot Browne before the first monthly number was in print, though as Dickens remarked to Forster when outlining the initial situations, " all kinds of things will be added to it, of course." The master plans of *Dombey and Son* and of subsequent novels almost certainly existed, but they have not survived on paper and in all probability they were never written down. The number plans were not primarily concerned with these master plans. At most they drew occasional attention to some prominent thread in the pattern, as when Dickens notes in the plan for *David Copperfield*, Part XII : " Carry the thread of Agnes through it all," or " Carry through, the unravelling of Uriah Heep, always by Mr. Micawber " in the plan for Part XVI, or " The man who, being utterly sensual and careless, comes to very much the same thing in the end as the Gradgrind school," a sentence in which he characterises James Harthouse in the first number plan of *Hard Times*. In short, the number plans show us Dickens not in the moments of creation, but in the moments of translating ideas into practice,§ deliberating how best to achieve a certain effect (" Louisa to be acted on by Harthouse, through Tom ? Yes," *Hard Times*, Part IV), when to introduce a predetermined theme (" Dora in declining health. First intimation ? Yes," *David Copperfield*, Part XVI), how to finish off a number (" Little

* *The Dickensian*, 1948, pp. 63, 183.
† F. G. Kitton, *The Novels of Charles Dickens* (London, 1897), p. 103.
‡ See *The Dickensian*, 1942, p. 219.
§ For several years Dickens kept a notebook in which he jotted down notions as they darted into his mind ; for example, " The unwieldy ship taken in tow by the snorting little steam Tug," and a subsequent note records " Done in Casby and Panks." This exceedingly important notebook, which was used by Forster for his *Life of Dickens*, was given by Mrs. Perugini to Mrs. Comyns Carr, and was later sold by Messrs. Sotheran & Co. in 1920 (*The Dickensian*, 1920, p. 198). I know nothing of its present whereabouts.

8

Yes? ?

Stop? ?

Run? ?

Yes.

Yes

No

No.

Living?

Dead.

Chapter XIX.

Look about and make a discovery.

Dare the way with the wicked
Do agnes
Dr Mistery
Seeing the Dyson
first Fall in Life
Seeing Cozy clearing hous
meets Stanforth

Chapter XX.

Stanforth's home.

Stanforth
Miss Darcie. "Thence hammer at her!"
"Oh! But it really does!" I went to them

Chapter XXI.

Little Emily.

Servant. Littimer.
Little Em'ly at Mr Omer's - Mr Omer "Two parties"
Dyson
Mr Barkis a Carrier
Mrs Dyson's account of the Misfortune of Harm

Em'ly and Mr. Peggotty, qy. To close the No. with her discovery ? Yes," *ibid*), or defining the dominant theme of a number (" David's Marriage to Dora," Part XIV ; " The Emigration No." Part XVIII). Sometimes he will review possible characters and defer their re-entry to a subsequent number ; thus Miss Mowcher's claim is rejected in Part X (chapters XXVIII-XXXI) with the note " *Impossible*—Try next time," and Mr. and Miss Murdstone are kept waiting in the wings for a call which is deferred from month to month from Part XIII till the final number. Occasionally a scene is planned at some length, as for example the storm scene in Yarmouth Roads (chapter LV). But more often the briefest of notes is enough : " Miss Murdstone comes on a donkey " is all that is needed to suggest that generously comic incident in chapter XIII. And that brings me to a final observation that though the majority of these jottings are related to incidents in the story, almost as many record the names of characters only. Their names, it would seem, were enough to suggest the parts the characters were to play.

In this article I have attempted to define the purposes which I believe Dickens had in mind when making these memoranda. On future occasions I hope to examine in closer detail the notes for *David Copperfield* and some other novels.

Design for the Cover of the *Peoples Edition* (1865) after *Phiz*

# BERNARD DARWIN

## *In Defence of Dora*

ALMOST my earliest recollection, as far as Dickens is concerned, is of myself, aged I suppose about twelve, on the floor under the dining-room table, sobbing over the deaths of Jip and Dora. Before that, I had had certain scenes from *Pickwick* read aloud to me, in particular the review and the cricket match, but *David Copperfield* was my first private enterprise in the Dickens country, and I read it more or less continuously for several years. I generally skipped that death scene, because I found it too much for me, as I still do. I have just re-read it yet again ; I did not hide under the table, but otherwise there was no difference after some sixty years. I am not very fond of Dickens's deathbed scenes. Mrs. Weller's is perfect in its dignity and simplicity, and Mr. Barkis's is a good second to it, but Little Paul, Little Johnny, Little Jo, Little Nell—no, emphatically no. I only mention this no doubt lamentable heresy of mine in order to show myself an unprejudiced witness in favour of Dora's : if I say that her death is pathetic, as I certainly do, then I have some modest claim to be heard.

But indeed, I think Dora is altogether pathetic and charming and lovable. If she is in any need of defence, I am prepared humbly to take up the challenge on her behalf. I have a friend who, should he read this, will strongly disapprove, but nevertheless let me say it out boldly and at once ; I would a thousand times rather marry Dora than Agnes. And I am glad to find that I have one supporter who is in himself worth an army, G. K. Chesterton. To be sure, he does not say he would like to marry either of them, but he clearly likes Dora much the best. " Dora, the first wife of David Copperfield," he says, " is a very genuine and amusing figure ; she has certainly far more force of character than Agnes." I pause to exclaim (with Mr. Weller), " Hooroar for the principle," and then quote his next sentence, " She represents the infinite and divine irrationality of the human heart."

Irrational she certainly was, but I am not prepared to admit she was silly. She was not good at ordering dinner, though she tried dreadfully hard over both the salmon and the oysters, nor at managing the maidservant, but there are many admirable people who can do neither. She could not do accounts, but to keep accounts is deemed by many one of the most degrading of human vices. I have been reading her again, and can only find one instance when she does exasperate me and appears a little silly and affected. It is on the occasion when David and Traddles come to call on Dora's aunts at Putney. When all has been satisfactorily settled, David is taken to see Dora and Jip (with his head tied up in a towel in the plate warmer). First Dora will not come out from behind the door, which is rather tiresome of her, and then wholly declines to see Traddles, which is very tiresome indeed. If I am making admissions, then I must also own that she shook her curls rather too much, but she had a hundred attractive qualities by way of compensation, and I don't think she would ever have grown half as silly as was Flora Finching. I love Flora's conversation, which is in its way almost as good as Mrs. Nickleby's, but she *was* silly.

Is there more delightful love-making in any book than that of David and Dora ? They were very young and foolish, no doubt, but with all its fairylike, unsubstantial quality, there is something beautifully sincere and simple about it, too. I think one appreciates it the better if one re-reads Dickens's letters to Mrs. Winter, who had been Maria

Beadnell, his first love. They are rather heartbreaking letters when we know the sequel, namely that the meeting again after three or four and twenty years was the saddest failure and that Dickens, expecting some renewal of the old romance—he hardly knew what—was instantly and utterly disenchanted. But the letters written before the meeting are wholly engaging and help us to understand why we are so touched by that youthful love-making. " People used to say to me," he wrote, " how pretty all that was, and how fanciful it was, and how elevated it was above the little foolish loves of very young men and women. But they little thought what reason I had to know it was true and nothing more nor less." A little later in the same letter he writes, " I have a strong belief—and there is no harm in adding hope to that—that perhaps you have once or twice laid down that book and thought, ' How dearly that boy must have loved me, and how vividly this man remembers it ! ' " That is the surpassing merit of this love-making, that it was all true, as true as Murdstone and Grinby and the King's Bench Prison and Captain Hopkins and his knife and fork. David could never smell a geranium leaf without a vision of Dora holding up Jip to put his nose into the flowers, and I venture to think that it is one tiny bit of evidence of the extraordinary force and vitality, as well as the charm, of that small scene that I have never been able to smell a geranium leaf without thinking of it. It would not in the least surprise me to hear that hundreds of people had the same feeling.

I have quoted with respectful approval Chesterton in favour of Dora. He makes a further remark about her with which I almost vehemently disagree. " What possessed Dickens," he asks, " to make her such a dehumanised prig as to recommend her husband to marry another woman ? One could easily respect a husband who after time and development made such a marriage, but surely not a wife who desired it." That passage has often worried me and still does so. I see nothing " dehumanised " in Dora, with the knowledge that she is dying, wanting David to be ultimately happy with Agnes, and Agnes, having loved him all her life, with David. Chesterton gives this as an example of the " vulgar optimism " of Dickens, of his desire to overwhelm his characters with comfort, to deal out happy endings in cheap charity towards them. That he does sometimes exhibit such a failing nobody can deny. He does it in this very book, when Mr. Micawber and Mr. Mell, both utterly incapable of succeeding in any mere worldly sense, are found flourishing at Port Middlebay as a Magistrate and a Head Master respectively. But I cannot for the life of me see why he should be pilloried for this fault on poor little Dora's account.

" Reasoning is worse than scolding ! " exclaimed Dora on one distressing occasion. " I didn't marry to be reasoned with. If you meant to reason with such a poor little thing as I am, you ought to have told me so. You cruel boy ! " She was entirely right. She ought no more to be reasoned about than reasoned with. You could have plenty of reasoning and to spare if you married Agnes, but there was only one way to treat Dora, and David very wisely adopted it when she paid one pound six for a salmon ; he said she was a mouse, and so she was, a most enchanting mouse.

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For Notes on *David Copperfield* see *The Dickensian* for 1943/4.

Notes on the Phiz Plates to *David Copperfield* see *The Dickensian* for 1944

# DICKENS'S FAVOURITE CHILD

By ROBERT HAMILTON

THE most remarkable thing about Dickens as a man, his many-sidedness, was also the most remarkable thing about him as a creative artist; and the two were closely related. The many aspects of his personality and character were reflected in the rich variety of his characters. He had in him elements of Pickwick, Swiveller, Bailey Junior, and even Quilp and Pecksniff, to name only a few. We should therefore expect to find a particularly intimate side of him in a novel such as *Copperfield* based directly on autobiographical fragments of his own life. Yet David remains one of his quietest and least personal creations, increasingly so with his growth from youth to manhood. The young David is not so much a person as a narrator and a symbol—a symbol of normal childhood everywhere. He embodies a universal experience of childhood; and it is this universal quality pervading the particular, the characters, places, and events observed by the narrator, that makes the writing so intimate. There are, it is true, directly autobiographical elements in *Copperfield*, but these relate more to events than to the personality of David. Dickens idealised his childhood. From the little we know, he must have been much more temperamental than David. David is sweet-tempered (apart from the Murdstone episode, which was exceptional) but nobody could have called Dickens that at any time, and certainly nobody would ever have called him "Daisy." By contrast, Pip is much more alive, and much more like his creator—touchy, vain, but fundamentally good-hearted. Of course, the adult David is completely unlike the adult Dickens, as unlike as a lamb to a fiery steed. But here we are concerned with the child.

It is very difficult, almost impossible, to create a convincing child character. Children in general lack the individuality of adults. Personality has not yet developed, and such personality as exists tends to be inhibited by imitativeness, which itself partly proceeds from lack of personality. But there is another reason for the impersonality of David which is bound up with the autobiographical form in fiction. Paradoxically, in the first person character is objectivised: in the third person, subjectivised. To make this clear. When a novelist employs the first person, the narrator tends to become artificial, due partly to the self-consciousness of the effort. He is not writing straightforward autobiography which concerns himself and his doings, but projecting an aspect of himself into the narration, creating a fictional self. At the same time, this self has to stand back from the narrative with sufficient detachment from other characters and events not to get in their way, and thus becomes rather disembodied. Conversely, fiction written in the usual third person often reveals far more of the author's character. Just because he is not consciously describing some aspect of himself, the unconscious elements of his character come into play. For example, Dickens would be inclined to idealise the ego that was expressed in David, and in doing so (particularly in the case of childhood, when he is describing himself at one remove) would guard against the self-revelation of undesirable traits; but when he was creating Swiveller or Quilp, he would be so engrossed in these objective characters that the Swiveller and Quilp-like elements in himself would be incorporated unconsciously. For all these reasons,

the young David, though delightful, is not a very real or convincing figure.

Yet the early chapters of *Copperfield* are among the highest in the field of literary art. The autobiographical form, whether real or fictional, imparts the serene quality of memory over the whole landscape of a book. The early chapters dealing with childhood embody, not only the past as such, but the specific past of childhood common to all of us, in which something that we once have been, and for ever lost, is re-lived. But the same quality applies in some measure to the whole book. Whether it is the church service at Blunderstone or the great storm, the awakening of love for Dora or the tragedy of Steerforth, the virtue of Agnes or the villainy of Heep—all is informed by a monumental serenity, unsurpassed, and perhaps unequalled, in the whole range of literature. *Great Expectations* has it also ; but it is a more restless book, more terse, swift-moving, and instinct with tragedy than *Copperfield*. In a great critical panegyric of Dickens, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, says of *Copperfield* : " That it is one of the few really great English novels cannot be denied except by the perverse. The high quality of the writing can hardly be paralleled."

The serene quality is, as we have seen, most perfect in the opening chapters, the most mature, limpid, and beautiful Dickens ever wrote. He entirely avoids the sentimentality that weakens so many of his quieter passages. Power, vitality, and humour were his greatest gifts : he was inclined to be mawkish when he became gentle or contemplative—and in no book could the temptation to sentimentality have been greater than in *Copperfield*. Yet in no other book is it so completely avoided. The only two faults in an almost faultless book are the dull passages about Martha (in whom it is impossible to be interested), and the rather melodramatic treatment of Emly's downfall. But of sentimentality (which is feeling aroused in excess of its object) there is not a trace. Compare the chapter describing David's last evening with his mother and Peggotty in the old home, foreshadowing the mother's approaching death, with the sentimentality of some of the passages foreshadowing the deaths of Paul and Little Nell. This chapter is one of the great things of human art, and its end, David's last sight of his mother on earth is as an example of the perfect paragraph, every sentence and word of which exactly conveys the emotion.

> I was in the carrier's cart when I heard her calling to me. I looked out, and she stood at the garden-gate alone, holding her baby up in her arms for me to see. It was cold still weather ; and not a hair of her head, or a fold of her dress stirred, and she looked intently at me, holding up her child.

Coming at the end of this supremely beautiful chapter, the effect is wonderful.

Among the finest things in *Copperfield* are the Retrospects, in which the whole spirit of the book is summed up. Their calm beauty, like the light of the setting sun over a still landscape, have the power to move us in the same way as the best of Wordsworth. They enshrine all the sadness for what is past in human life, together with a calm happiness that arises just because the past *is* past, and can neither hurt us like the present or beguile us like the future.

> Weeks, months, seasons, pass along. They seem little more than a summer day and a winter evening. Now, the Common where I walk with Dora is all in bloom, a field of bright gold ; and now the unseen heather lies in mounds and bunches underneath a covering of snow. In a breath, the river that flows through our Sunday walks is sparkling in the summer sun, is ruffled by the winter wind, or thickened with drifting heaps of ice. Faster than ever a river ran towards the sea, it flashes, darkens, and rolls away.

In analysing a fine or distinctive passage by a master of literature we often find that when we come to write it out and weigh it word by word, faults that we missed in reading it as a whole and in its general context are often revealed. But this is rarely the case in the best passages of Dickens, such as the above, which will bear the minutest scrutiny. Each word is exactly right: the balance and rhythm of the sentences is faultless: the emotion is profound. It epitomises the whole book, which passes like a river towards the sea, serene, majestic, and of a surpassing loveliness.

There is an intimacy in *Copperfield* found nowhere else in Dickens; and nowhere is this intimacy more subtly enshrined than in the mother-son relationship. It is interesting that David (a posthumous child) has a mother who is devoted to him and to whom he is devoted; but no father. Might it not be that Dickens, who subconsciously adored his mother but never quite got the love he wanted in return, compensated in this book by making David an only child having a mother only, two souls completely wrapped up in each other. At length a father stole her away from him—though in order to equalise justice (for Dickens was very fond of his own father) he made him a step-father. There are plenty of answers, Freudian and otherwise; and like Rosa Dartle, we should like to know—if, indeed, there *is* anything to know. What is more important is that the real father of David was Dickens. *David Copperfield* was the favourite child of Dickens's brain; and he put his deepest self into it, as he says in the Preface:

"It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two-years' imaginative task; or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet I have nothing else to tell, unless, indeed, I were to confess . . . that no one can ever believe this Narrative in the reading more than I have believed it in the writing."

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"Now here you see young David Copperfield, and the question I put to you is, what shall I do with him?"

By Harry Furniss.

# OPINIONS

## W. M. THACKERAY

Get *David Copperfield*: by Jingo its beautiful—it beats the yellow chap [*Pendennis*] of this month hollow. May 1849.

*David Copperfield* . . . in which there is a charming bit of insanity [Mr. Dick], and which I begin to believe is the very best thing the author has yet done. September 1849.

Boz is capital this month [Chapters XXXII to XXXIV]—some very neat pretty natural writing indeed—better than somebody else again. By Jove he is a clever fellow, and somebody else must and shall do better. March 1850.

## LEO TOLSTOY

If you sift the world's prose literature, Dickens will remain; sift Dickens, *David Copperfield* will remain; sift *David Copperfield*, the description of the storm at sea will remain.

## G. K. CHESTERTON

But when we come to Dickens and his work itself, what is there to be said? What is there to be said about earthquake and the dawn? He has created, especially in this book of *David Copperfield*, he has created, creatures who cling to us and tyrannise over us, creatures whom we would not forget if we could, creatures whom we could not forget if we would, creatures who are more actual than the man who made them.

## GEORGE GISSING

*David Copperfield* Dickens held to be his best book, and the world has agreed with him. In no other does the narrative move on with such full sail from first to last. He wrote from his heart; picturing all he had suffered as a child, and even touching upon the domestic trouble of his later life. It is difficult to speak of *David Copperfield* in terms of cool criticism.

## A. W. WARD

[*David Copperfield*] . . . with its wealth of pathos and humour, with the glow of youth still tinging its pages, but with the gentler mood of manhood pervading it from first to last. The *reality* of *David Copperfield* is, perhaps, the first feature in it likely to strike the reader new to its charms; but a closer acquaintance will produce, and familiarity will enhance, the sense of its wonderful *art*. Nothing will ever destroy the popularity of a work of which it can truly be said that, while offering to his muse a gift not less beautiful than precious, its author put into it his life's blood.

## ANDRÉ MAUROIS

The success of *David Copperfield* surpassed that of all Dickens's other books. . . . For the first time Dickens had been freed from his need for far-fetched inventions, and had been content, almost throughout the whole book, with happenings that were perfectly possible. No doubt the real memories had restrained his imagination. After *David Copperfield* Dickens was no longer just a great writer; he was *the* great writer, with a position unique in England, in the now friendly United States, and even on the Continent, where his works had been translated.

## E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR

In *David Copperfield* Dickens reached the highest point of his achievement. In many of his later books more care is evident; a determination to improve both in style and characterisation is obvious; but there is a freshness and spontaneity about this book which places it among the masterpieces of English novel writing. It is, as the French say, *de coeur*. . . . The characters it portrays, the lessons it teaches, are, as a whole, beautiful; and that culminating touch where Peggotty, finding Little Em'ly, throws a handkerchief over her tear-stained, repentant face, is a touch of genius, as sure as was that in *Vanity Fair*, when Becky admires her husband whose blow at Lord Steyne shatters all her schemes.

# DAVID'S CONFIDENCES

By T. W. HILL

A WONDERFUL novel is *David Copperfield*: one hundred years old and still shewing all the signs of a long life in front of it. This charming story has been a good deal in my mind lately, and I would like to take a backward glance at the time when *David Copperfield* was written. I do not hope to say anything new, but I do hope that fellow lovers of Dickens will have some of their own conclusions recalled to them.

I am not going to trace the autobiographical parallels between David Copperfield's story and that of Charles Dickens. That has been done many times and never with more insight and sympathy than by Gwen Major in her article "Into the Shadowy World" in *The Dickensian*, 1944, page 15. What I do propose is to try to reconstruct the processes by which Dickens came to project so much of himself into this particular novel.

*David Copperfield*, in spite of its prominence in the history of English literature, was not by a long way the first book in the world to be autobiographical; it was not even the first of Dickens's books to contain reminiscences of its author's own life; such recollections occur in *Sketches by Boz*, in *Pickwick Papers*, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and in *Dombey and Son*, all written before *David Copperfield*. All disguised of course, but manifestly recalling to himself, though not to his contemporary readers, episodes in his own past. What was it that caused Dickens to make *David Copperfield* more autobiographical than was his custom? Why did he wait till he was nearly forty years of age? I think there were two or three factors working together. The writing of *Dombey and Son* had been completed in autumn, 1847, and he was "resting," which, with Dickens meant only seeking restlessly for other fields of activity; he travelled all over the country making public speeches at the opening of educational institutions, and appearing with his friends in dramatic performances in aid of charity, and in various other ways keeping "on the go." But he was not *writing*, the mechanical act of which he was certainly extremely fond; his vast correspondence shews that. (I have an idea that if he entered a room and saw a table with writing materials upon it he would itch to sit down and write.) And of course he was worrying in case he should lose touch with his public. He had no immediate idea for a new book, and he entertained the notion of writing his autobiography.

I picture him at thirty-six years of age, at the height of his fame, the foremost English novelist, a national figure, well-known as a public speaker, a more than usually good amateur actor, secure in the affection of his readers, and surrounded by a large circle of friends and admirers. There was, however, a skeleton in his cupboard; he was haunted by certain episodes of his adolescent period that he kept hidden in the innermost recesses of his memory; episodes that he apparently thought might be considered as not particularly creditable, if not actually shameful; episodes, anyway, to which he never alluded even to his dearest (his wife and children) or to his closest friends or to his most intimate Forster. Now this strikes me as curious as he had many living relatives, father, mother, brothers and sisters and others who must have known of the troubles of his childhood and early youth. But to these relatives the lad's hardships would not seem important as they were not directly affected; they would not be likely to talk about Charles's troubles; they might not realise that they *were* troubles, so he was able to preserve silence; indeed in the case of his

father, John Dickens, that gentleman had trials enough of his own that occupied his thoughts to the exclusion of his son's anxieties. Moreover to speak of them would recall his own share in bringing them about, and probably also he did not appreciate the extent to which those early experiences has sered the boy's memory; and similar reasons would prevent the mother from saying anything. So Dickens was able to nurse those memories alone, although some of his books contained allusions of which even Forster knew nothing.

If Dickens had ideas of writing his autobiography, he must have thought that his life-story would be worth recording, for he took himself very seriously, and he probably felt that his faithful readers would welcome some account of him as a man—as a personality. In November, 1846, recalling in a letter to Forster his childhood with Mrs. Roylance in connexion with Mrs. Pipchin's in *Dombey and Son*, he adds: "I thought of that passage in my small life. Shall I leave you my life in MS. when I die? There are things in it that would touch you very much . . ." Forster could not know to what he was referring although he must have heard from Dickens at various times in their confidential chats a good deal of his early life.

In the following Spring (1847) it came out during a conversation that Dickens when a boy "employed in a warehouse near the Strand" had received half-a-crown from a former colleague of Dickens's father at Somerset House; this was Charles Wentworth Dilke who was then one of the managers of the *Daily News* and therefore known to both Dickens and Forster. This conversation took place during the period of "resting" that I mentioned a few paragraphs back when he was thinking of making notes for an autobiography. So, soon after the conversation he took Forster into his confidence, probably the more willingly as Forster had never probed for more than Dickens chose to tell him, and gave him some account of his boyhood including the "shameful" episodes. The revelations must have impressed Forster for he then suggested that as they had already agreed that the next serial novel might be written in the first person, some of Dickens's own early adventures might be used as a basis for the plot. Dickens wrote what Forster called the "Fragment of Autobiography" that he used in writing the *Life*. Staunch and loyal friend that he was ("dear and trusty" he is called in Dickens's will) he preserved carefully Dickens's MS. and never divulged its contents to a soul; consequently Dickens's wife and children never learned anything of his tribulations till the *Life* was published after his death.

The committing to paper of his own experiences would not have been strange, as one gathers that quite early in his career Dickens was feeling that as he became more popular and respected he would like to have more intimate contact with his readers than he could get by publishing his novels in monthly instalments. He was feeling that it would contribute more to his usefulness if his relations with them could be of a close personal nature, working in some medium by which he could, besides writing fiction, express his personality, as he was conscious that his influence was having some effect on the public mind. He thought of a periodical on the lines of the *Spectator* or *The Bee* of the previous century. In 1840 he started *Master Humphrey's Clock*. But the strain of writing in weekly instalments did not suit Dickens and after two years *Master Humphrey's Clock* ran down, and the monthly system was resumed in 1843 with *Martin Chuzzlewit*. But the hankering for the personal touch remained; Dickens knew he was a national force in social reform. When this active interest arose I do not know, but in my own opinion it dated from the time when he found how the people responded to the exposure of the Fleet Prison in *Pickwick Papers* and the Poor Law Institutions and the

Police Court scenes in *Oliver Twist*. Before that, in the *Sketches by Boz*, the essays had been tentative and descriptive only, although they must have raised in him the urge to do something constructive for the "under-dog."

As Master Humphrey had turned out to be unsatisfactory, he must find some fresh method of getting the personal contact he craved and he thought of a daily medium and the *Daily News* was founded in 1846 with himself as editor. But again he failed; he was not constituted to be a newspaper editor and could not stand the nose-to-the-grindstone routine of daily journalism and gave it up to John Forster after three weeks, using his freedom to concentrate on a new long novel in monthly numbers, and *Dombey and Son* appeared a few months later.

It was during the period after Dombey that, as I have already related, the idea of an autobiography occurred to him.

Having decided after consultation with Forster to make the narrative in the first person and to use his "fragment of autobiography," I am led to wonder what sort of a book Dickens orignally intended; the title he first chose was "Mag's Diversions." Now that is an ancient saying for a sort of "High Bobberee," a more or less hilarious muddle—one recalls the expression "kicking up Meg's diversions." Did Dickens intend to get as much fun as possible out of his youthful experiences? Had he some idea of writing, as a change from the tragedy of Dombey's broken home, broken fortune and final senility, a humorous medley on the lines of Pickwick? If so, he must have begun to realise how deeply the iron of those awful months of drudgery had eaten into his soul, and the book developed under his hand, in spite of the gentle humour with which he treated the subject, into a series of people each of whom underwent sorrow and disappointment. Micawber is the only exception and he, to his everlasting glory, is always resilient and "bobs up serenely" without letting his trials overwhelm him, and his final reward is to become practically the first citizen of Port Middlebay, Australia, its distinguished and respected District Magistrate. Herein lies, I think, a great parable.

The first-personal-narration in the book gave its readers some sense that *David Copperfield* was in some undefined way autobiographical. Dickens must have found some consolation in thus confiding in his readers without letting them know the truth, and he revealed this sense of mutual exchange of confidences in the misty kind of youthful impressions running in his narrative when he wrote to Forster about the composition of number four, containing the Murdstone and Grinby episodes, that it was a "very complicated weaving of truth and fiction."

While engaged on *David Copperfield* and its new exposure of debtors' prisons, Dickens's wish for even more personal contact with his public never left him, and having failed in *Master Humphrey's Clock* and the *Daily News*, he was casting about for a new and better medium, and finally he hit upon exactly what he wanted; again it was to be a weekly periodical and again it was to be a kind of *Spectator*; it should consist of essays on topics of current interest, and serial stories not necessarily by himself, and occasional poetry; its name, *Household Words*, redolent of Dickens's own obsession. The first number, price threepence, appearing in March, 1850, while only one half of *David Copperfield* had been published, is significant in itself, as the novel dealt with the impressions of his past life and *Household Words* was concerned with his thoughts on and reactions to current events. Look at the contents of the very first number: (1) the first instalment of a short serial "Lizzie Leigh"; (2) an article on the work of the Post Office; (3) a poem; (4) The Amusements of the People, part I; (5) an article on Spiritualism; (6) another poem; (7) Mrs. Chisholm's

work for Emigration, and a few short paragraphs on current events. Everything was anonymous although we now know that "Lizzie Leigh" was written by Mrs. Gaskell and "The Amusements of the People" by Dickens himself.

Nevertheless I do not think too much stress should be laid on the autobiographical element in *David Copperfield*. It was pre-eminently a work of fiction. And here is an example of what I mean: in chapter LVIII, after the death of Dora, the death of Steerforth, and the emigration of the Micawbers and the Peggottys, David has gone abroad for three years; while in Switzerland he "resumes his pen" and writes a story that Traddles publishes for him; it is his second book, as a few sentences further on he "fell to work on a new fancy" and calls it his "third work of fiction." All this is only a faint approximation of the facts of Dickens's real life as we know it, but at the same time it does reflect something of his progress as an author.

Yet it cannot be denied that all through, while reading the story, one feels strongly that it is somehow real, that it does convey in a vivid way Dickens's mental picture of his own former experiences; and there is the secret of its attraction, which does not diminish with years or with repeated re-reading.

In the preface to the first bound edition Dickens speaks of his "pleasure in the achievement of a long design." I read in this that he considered *David Copperfield* was in some way a part of his unfulfilled ideas about writing his autobiography and that it took the place of a more formal publication. He also calls it "dismissing some portion of himself into the Shadowy World," and one cannot express any surprise, that, in a preface to a later edition, he adds: "Of all my books I like this the best."

*David Copperfield* is autobiographical; Dickens for years hid his secret in his breast. I wonder what Forster thought of that phrase on the cover of the green monthly numbers: "(Which He Never Meant To Be Published On Any Account)."

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The rectory at Blundeston, Suffolk of the "Rookery" of *David Copperfield*.

# AN ECHO OF THE COPPERFIELD DAYS

By W. J. CARLTON

MUCH of the obscurity which had long shrouded Dickens's activities in youth and early manhood has been dispersed as new sources of information have come to light, but many questions await an answer before we can hope to get a clear picture of his vicissitudes during the period which he himself was wont to call, with perhaps a touch of wistfulness, " the Copperfield days. "

During the whole of 1833 and the greater part of 1834 he was living with his parents in rooms above the premises of one Robert Burr, an upholsterer, at 18 Bentinck Street, near Manchester Square, Marylebone. From this address he wrote one Friday morning to his friend, William Henry Kolle, giving some illuminating details of his negotiations with the *Monthly Magazine* for the publication of his earliest sketches, offering to stand godfather to Kolle's expected firstborn, and explaining why he had failed to keep an appointment with him. " I only returned from my uncle's at Norwood (where I have been busily engaged for a week past, and whither I return again to-day) late last night . . . . . As I am not certain how long I shall be detained at Norwood, I cannot say when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you . . . . . Business in the shape of masses of papers, plans and prospectuses, and pleasure in the shape of a very nice pair of black eyes, call me to Norwood ; of course the call is imperative and must be obeyed."

Internal evidence points to this undated letter having been written early in 1834, not long after the publication of " A Dinner at Poplar Walk " in the *Monthly Magazine* of December, 1833, and before the birth of Kolle's daughter in April, 1834. More than six months had passed since Dickens's final breach with the fickle Maria Beadnell (the original of Dora) on the eve of Kolle's wedding to her elder sister Anne, and in the interval the young shorthand reporter had thrown himself with redoubled energy into his work in an attempt to alleviate the bitterness of unrequited love. The passages quoted from the letter to Kolle suggest some interesting speculations as to the nature of the business which took him to Norwood and the identity of the owner of the " very nice pair of black eyes " which lured him back there.

The uncle at whose house Dickens had been so busily occupied was John Henry Barrow, barrister-at-law, a younger brother of Mrs. Dickens. In 1831 and for some years afterwards Barrow was living in the parish of St. Luke, Norwood, his London office being at 3 Abingdon Street, Westminster. Called to the bar on November 26th, 1828, he never practised, but in January of that year founded and edited the *Mirror of Parliament*, a record of the debates in the national legislature which it sought to reflect as faithfully as its name implied. On this remarkable publication Barrow's brother, Edward, and his brother-in-law, John Dickens, were early engaged, and in 1832 his clever nephew Charles Dickens joined the staff. When parliament was in session he plied his pencil in the reporters' gallery, but during the recess he found other outlets for his amazing energy and was already beginning to write the first of those delightful sketches to be collected later under the title *Sketches by Boz*.

At the time of Dickens's visits to Norwood the reputation of the *Mirror of Parliament* stood high for the fulness and accuracy of its reports. Its editor had many friends in parliamentary circles and, encouraged by the success of his venture, he enlisted their support with a view to getting it placed on a more secure and permanent footing. On May 12th, 1834, he presented a petition to the House of Commons submitting that it was of the utmost importance that " a full, faithful and impartial parliamentary record, such as is comprised

in the *Mirror of Parliament*, be maintained and continued " ; but the petition was withdrawn on the Speaker pointing out that it was based on a breach of privilege. Undeterred by this rebuff, Barrow's friends introduced a motion ten days later, calling upon the Select Committee on the Business of the House " to consider and report on the expediency of establishing or encouraging the publication of an authentic Report of the Debates arising in the House, relating to public and private business, and of the proceedings connected therewith." Presented by William Tooke, M.P. for Truro, and supported by many other Members in the debate which followed, the motion was opposed from the government benches by Mr. Edward Stanley and lost by the narrow margin of 18 votes.

Some remarks in the *Times* of May 23rd, impugning the fidelity of the *Mirror's* reports and the motives actuating the promoters of the motion in parliament, were keenly resented by Barrow and drew from him a long and vigorous retort, printed in the *Morning Chronicle* the next day.

It may be conjectured with some confidence that the " masses of papers, plans and prospectuses " with which Dickens had to deal at Norwood were not unconnected with the *Mirror of Parliament* and his uncle's attempt to secure for it official recognition. From 1831 to 1835 Barrow was living in Lower (now West) Norwood, three of his children being christened in the church of St. Luke. By 1836 he had removed to Ellens Villa, Beulah Park (or Beulah Village, as it is called in some directories). Ellens Villa stood on the south side of Collier's Water Lane (now Thornton Heath High Street), and is clearly shown on the tithe map of 1847 to the south of Beulah Spa. Barrow's name is found in the Croydon rate books from 1836 to 1839, but in December of the latter year it is replaced by that of Dr. Gehle. Some of his domestic troubles may be traced in the register of All Saints' Church, Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood, which records the burials of two young children and the baptism of another. In directories of the time the name of J. H. Barrow is coupled with Ellens Villa as late as 1842. When death came to the barrister at Newington, on March 30th, 1858, his mortal remains were taken to Norwood Cemetery and laid to rest near the spot where his wife Lucina had been interred seven years before.

When Barrow went to live there, Norwood was little more than a hamlet, remarkable for its healthy situation, picturesque scenery and fine views of London and the surrounding district. Situated on the skirts of the great North Wood seven miles south of the metropolis, it was beginning to grow into a place of some consequence and was a favourite residence of well-to-do city merchants and professional men. Neat, commodious villas were springing up, and the virtues of a mineral saline spring which gushed out from the brow of Beulah Hill, some 300 feet above sea-level, began to attract visitors. The owner of the estate decided to popularise the spring and converted the grounds, nearly 30 acres in extent, into a fashionable resort. Beulah Spa was opened to the public on August 1st, 1831, the price of admission being 2s. on ordinary days and 2s. 6d. on fête days. Its site was between Leather Bottle Lane (now Spa Hill) and Grange Wood Road, the entrance being a rustic lodge, whence a new carriage road led to the ecclesiastical town of Croydon. Rustic shelters were provided, and in the centre was an octagonal reading and refreshment room, from each side of which stretched a long line of arbours in which those who had taken the waters could sit and rest. The spring was covered by a thatched hut in the shape of a wigwam. Opposite was a bandstand, in which during the season a military band played daily from 11 a.m. till dusk, while those who felt energetic enough to dance could do so on a lawn specially prepared for the purpose. Other amenities were

an archery ground, a *camera obscura*, a circus ring and a maze which Boz compared for intricacy with the maze of streets, courts, lanes and alleys of Seven Dials. On a height a terrace was laid out from which there was a magnificent view of the surrounding country. Coaches ran three times a day between Charing Cross and Beulah Spa, the fare being half-a-crown inside, half price outside. A piece called *The Beulah Spa*, by Charles Dance, was produced by Madame Vestris at the Olympic Theatre in 1833.

In 1835, a change of ownership led to the grounds being laid out with innumerable flower-beds, and the price of admission was reduced to one shilling. The grounds and buildings were depicted on the cover of a popular sentimental song, "I met her at Beulah Spa," but the vogue declined and in 1851 they were described as having fallen into a languid and deserted condition. Three years later the grounds were closed, portions of them are now incorporated in the gardens of various private residences, and Beulah Spa is no more.

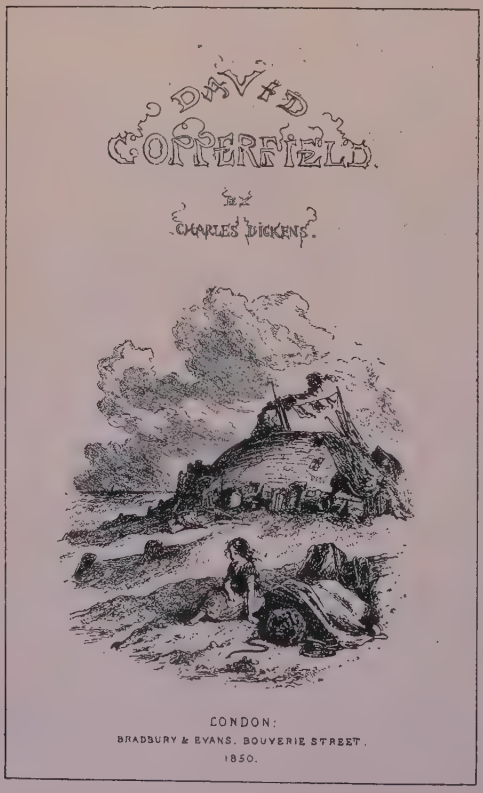
That Dickens knew the district well is clear from more than one allusion to it in his works. Norwood is first mentioned in "A Passage from the Life of Mr. Watkins Tottle," printed in the *Monthly Magazine* of January and February, 1835. When that lovelorn bachelor alighted from the Norwood stage coach before the "cardboard-looking house with disguised chimneys" which proved to be the dwelling of Mr. Gabriel Parsons, he found that worthy playing cricket on the lawn, likened by Dickens to a large sheet of green letter-paper. Unforeseen circumstances conspired to prevent his being one of a small party arranged to visit the Beulah Spa on the following Saturday.

The home of the manager of the firm of Dombey & Son, Mr. James Carker, "situated in the green and wooded country near Norwood," was described at greater length. "It is not a mansion; it is of no pretensions as to size; but it is beautifully arranged, and tastefully kept. The lawn, the soft, smooth slope, the flower-garden, the clumps of trees where graceful forms of ash and willow are not wanting, the conservatory, the rustic verandah with sweet-smelling creeping plants entwined about the pillars, the simple exterior of the house, the well-ordered offices, though all upon the diminutive scale proper to a mere cottage, bespeak an amount of comfort within, that might serve for a palace. This indication is not without warrant; for within it is a house of refinement and luxury. Rich colours, excellently blended, meet the eye at every turn; in the furniture—its proportions admirably devised to suit the shapes and sizes of the small rooms; on the walls; upon the floors; tingeing and subduing the light that comes in through the odd glass doors and windows here and there. There are a few choice prints and pictures too; in quaint nooks and recesses there is no want of books; and there are games of skill and chance set forth on tables—fantastic chessmen, dice, backgammon, cards, and billiards."

But it is in *David Copperfield* that Norwood figures most prominently as the country residence of Mr. Spenlow, the dignified proctor of Doctors' Commons to whom David had been articled by his aunt. Mr. Spenlow's house, too, had a lovely garden, beautifully kept, a charming lawn, clusters of trees and "perspective walks arched over with trellis-work, on which shrubs and flowers grew in the growing season." Here David was invited to spend a week-end and first met his employer's bewitching daughter, Dora Spenlow, whose captive and slave he became from that moment. Thither he walked "miles upon miles" daily in the fond hope of catching a glimpse of his idol, until he was "as well known on the Norwood Road as the postmen on that beat." It is probably safe to say that this last sentence might have been written as truly of Charles Dickens as of his *alter ego*, David Copperfield, and it can hardly be doubted that the descriptions of the

homes of Mr. Carker and Mr. Spenlow owed much to the author's recollection of frequent visits to that of John Henry Barrow. Ellens Villa was within half a mile of the spa, and it was this romantic setting that Dickens chose for the courtship of David and Dora. Readers of *David Copperfield* will recall how the hero of that matchless masterpiece, in which fact and fiction are almost inextricably interwoven, took a night walk to Norwood, perambulated round and round the house and garden for two hours, looking through the crevices in the palings, getting his chin by dint of violent exertion above the rusty nails on the top, blowing kisses at the lights in the windows, and romantically calling on the night, at intervals, to shield his Dora from —he didn't exactly know what. And how, soon afterwards, having been invited by Mr. Spenlow to join a little picnic on the occasion of Dora's birthday, and having sent down by the Norwood coach the night before, a delicate little hamper containing crackers with the tenderest mottoes that could be got for money, the lovesick David trotted down to Norwood on a gallant grey, with a bouquet in his hat to keep it fresh.

We know that many of Copperfield's experiences had been, *mutatis mutandis*, those of Dickens himself, and that Dora Spenlow had her counterpart in Maria Beadnell. The fact that William Hall, of Chapman and Hall, lived at Norwood and that Dickens visited him there (see Forster, Book 2, Chap. viii) has hitherto been given as the reason why Norwood was chosen as the scene of David's meetings with his future child-wife. The letter to Kolle makes it clear not only that Dickens was employed by his uncle at Norwood in the capacity of amanuensis, at least two years before he became acquainted with William Hall, but that his visits were rendered more agreeable by the presence there of an unknown member of the fair sex. 'I broke my heart into the smallest pieces, many times between thirteen and three-and-twenty," he confessed to his fellow journalist Powell in 1845. The name of the black-eyed beauty of Norwood may never be known, and although her charms awakened such pleasurable emotions in the breast of the young reporter the impression cannot have been very deep or lasting. It must suffice to point out that Norwood was associated in the novelist's mind with an idyll of his youth and to suggest that this may have influenced him in choosing that "green and wooded country" when he came to write of David's wooing of Dora.



# *COPPERFIELD*, FACT OR FICTION ?

By J. H. McNULTY

THERE is never likely to be a unanimous decision on the question, which is Dickens's greatest book ? *David Copperfield*, itself, holds only a position of disputed pre-eminence, a position somewhat similar to that of Shakespeare's " King Lear." The critics consider it the poet's greatest work, but it is the favourite of few, if any readers, though they concur in the critics' verdict. And with *David Copperfield* it is nearly the same. No one denies its greatness, but many deny it the first place in their affections. It divides the works of Dickens into two almost equal portions, and it is a fine point of criticism to decide which is the better. Some will prefer the freshness, " the gay confident morning," of the earlier books ; others will love better the mature beauty, the afternoon glow of the later works.

Dickens began his career by giving the world his happiest book, the *Pickwick Papers*, and immediately followed it by his saddest, *Oliver Twist*. There is a slight development among the excellent books that followed up to the publication of *David Copperfield* and then, as some think, there is a decline, though this is vigorously denied by others. William Bagehot, an excellent critic, goes so far as to write : " We should not like to have to speak in detail of Mr. Dickens's later works and we have not done so." To which many would answer : Why not ?

However much we may admire *David Copperfield*, many do feel a certain hesitation. It is so different. The autobiographical strain in it makes the difference and lends it a touch of sadness. Brimley Johnson has touched on the difficulty. He writes : " It contains most of Dickens and is least like Dickens." But we must not exaggerate the difference, nor should the fact that it is partly a piece of his own life lessen its interest, rather should it increase it. Meredith wrote part of his own life in *Evan Harrington* and it is his happiest book.

This is not so with *David Copperfield* and the true portion is, perhaps, the least happy. After having written the stories of the children of his imagination, Dickens, one hundred years ago, told a part of his own story. It is a fragment only, and much of the book, and many of the characters are either creations of his own, or are so coloured by his imagination as to be really original works of genius. His father may indeed have given a hint for Mr. Micawber, the basis of the wonderful creature here depicted, but that is all. These two, for we well know that Mrs. Micawber " will never desert Mr. Micawber," are, perhaps, the most wonderful couple to be found in the whole of the Dickens world. Mr. Micawber's eloquence, with its sudden failures, the fall as delightful as the flight, the renewal of hope with the prospect of new adventure ; and Mrs. Micawber's wisdom and flood of words arguing to defend positions no one dreamed of attacking, and her unfailing belief in her husband's talents, these are sufficient alone to make the book a success. But they are not alone. Betsey Trotwood runs them close, equals or, some might say, surpasses them.

She is like a female Dr. Johnson, all the roughness is on the outside. As the kind-hearted Doctor made his house a place of refuge for some poor old people, so did Betsey Trotwood make her house a home for poor Mr. Dick.

She could not be unkind, and when she wished to make a comparison she compares David, to his disadvantage, with his non-existent sister, surely the most harmless of all comparisons.

With what fortitude, what unconcern does she meet the loss of her fortune and with what prudent, but useless economy, does she prepare for it.

"Trot, my dear," said my Aunt, when she saw me making preparations for compounding her usual night-draught, "No!"

"Nothing, Aunt?"

"Not wine, my dear. Ale."

"But there is wine here, Aunt. And you always have it made of wine."

"Keep that, in case of sickness," said my Aunt. "We mustn't use it carelessly, Trot. Ale for me. Half a pint————."

"My dear," said my Aunt, after taking a spoonful of it, "it's a great deal better than wine. Not half so bilious."

I suppose I looked doubtful, for she added:

"Tut, tut, child. If nothing worse than Ale happens to us, we are well off."

This is as true to-day as it was then.

There is an appropriateness in everything this wonderful woman says. When Uriah Heep was jerking himself in a more intolerable fashion than usual, she says, "Don't be galvanic, sir."

"I ask your pardon, Miss Trotwood,", returned Uriah, "I'm aware you're nervous."

"Go along with you," said my Aunt, anything but appeased. "Don't presume to say so, I'm nothing of the sort. If you're an eel, sir, conduct yourself like one. If you're a man, control your limbs, sir."

She had an exquisite taste in names and could not stand the name of Peggotty, and thoroughly approved when it was changed to Barkis.

"Well, that is human. It sounds less as if you wanted a missionary. How d'ye do, Barkis? I hope you're well."

The death of Barkis has one of those touches of tragic beauty with which Dickens sometimes startles the reader.

"I was on the point of asking him if he knew me, when he tried to stretch out his arm, and said to me, distinctly, with a pleasant smile, 'Barkis is willin.'"

"And, it being low water, he went out with the tide."

There is a superb passage on Blood, blue blood, of course, at the house of Mr. Waterbrook.

"We might have been a party of Ogres, the conversation assumed such a sanguine complexion. 'I confess I am of Mrs. Waterbrook's opinion,' said Mr. Waterbrook, with his wineglass to his eye. 'Other things are all very well in their way, but give me Blood!' 'Oh! there is nothing,' observed (Mrs. Spiker) Hamlet's Aunt, 'so satisfactory to one. There is nothing that is so much one's beau-ideal of all that sort of thing, speaking generally. There are some low minds, not many, I am happy to believe, but there are some, that would prefer to do what I should call bow down before idols. Positively Idols! Before services, intellect, and so on. But these are intangible points. Blood is not so. We see blood in a nose, and we know it. We meet with it in a chin, and we say "There it is, that's Blood! It is an actual matter of fact. We point it out, it admits of no doubt."

This excellent piece of satire is followed by the anonymous conversation between Mr. Gulpidge and Mr. Spiker where the matters discussed are of such immense importance that no names may be mentioned and in place of names, letters only are used. 'That affair of the first bond for four thousand five hundred pounds has not taken the course that was expected, Gulpidge,' said Mr. Spiker.

'Do you mean the D of A's?' said Mr. Spiker.

'The C of B's,' said Mr. Gulpidge.

Mr. Spiker raised his eyebrows, and looked much concerned.

'When the question was referred to Lord ——I needn't mention him,' said Mr. Gulpidge, checking himself——

'I understand,' said Mr. Spiker, 'N.'

Mr. Gulpidge darkly nodded, 'was referred to him, his answer was "Money or no release!"

'Lord bless my soul!' cried Mr. Spiker.

'Money or no release,' repeated Mr. Gulpidge firmly. 'The next in reversion—you understand me?'

'K,' said Mr. Spiker, with an ominous look.

'K then positively refused to sign. He was attended at Newmarket for that purpose, and he point-blank refused to do it.'

Mr. Spiker was so interested that he became quite stony."

After this splendid piece of pompous nonsense, let us turn to one of the greatest scenes in the book, the great storm at Yarmouth. It is, of course, known to all readers, but what is not so well known is Ruskin's comment on it. In *Modern Painters* he had described a storm at sea, and this passage was afterwards reprinted in the little book of extracts called by the rather fanciful title *Frondes Agrestes*—projecting branches.

Ruskin wrote a note on this passage. "The whole of this passage was written merely to show the meaning of Turner's picture of the steamer in distress, throwing up signals. It is a good study of wild weather, but separate from its aim, utterly feeble in comparison to the few words by which any of our great poets will describe seas, when they have got to do it. I am rather proud of the short sentence in the *Harbours of England* describing a great breaker against rock. 'One moment, a flint cave—the next, a marble pillar—the next, a fading cloud.' But there is nothing in sea description, detailed, like Dickens's storm at the death of Ham in *David Copperfield*."

This is probably the greatest tribute ever paid to the descriptive powers of Dickens. It can be measured only by the splendour of Ruskin's description with which it is compared.

Some of the characters in *David Copperfield* appear to have an influence in unexpected places. Roy Richmond, the amazing father in Meredith's *Adventures of Harry Richmond* is obviously Mr. Micawber's brother brought up in aristocratic circumstances.

Dora's aunts, Miss Clarissa and Miss Lavinia Spenlow, seem to have suggested to Meredith, Miss Dorothea and Miss Virginia Duvidney, the two aunts in *One of Our Conquerors*.

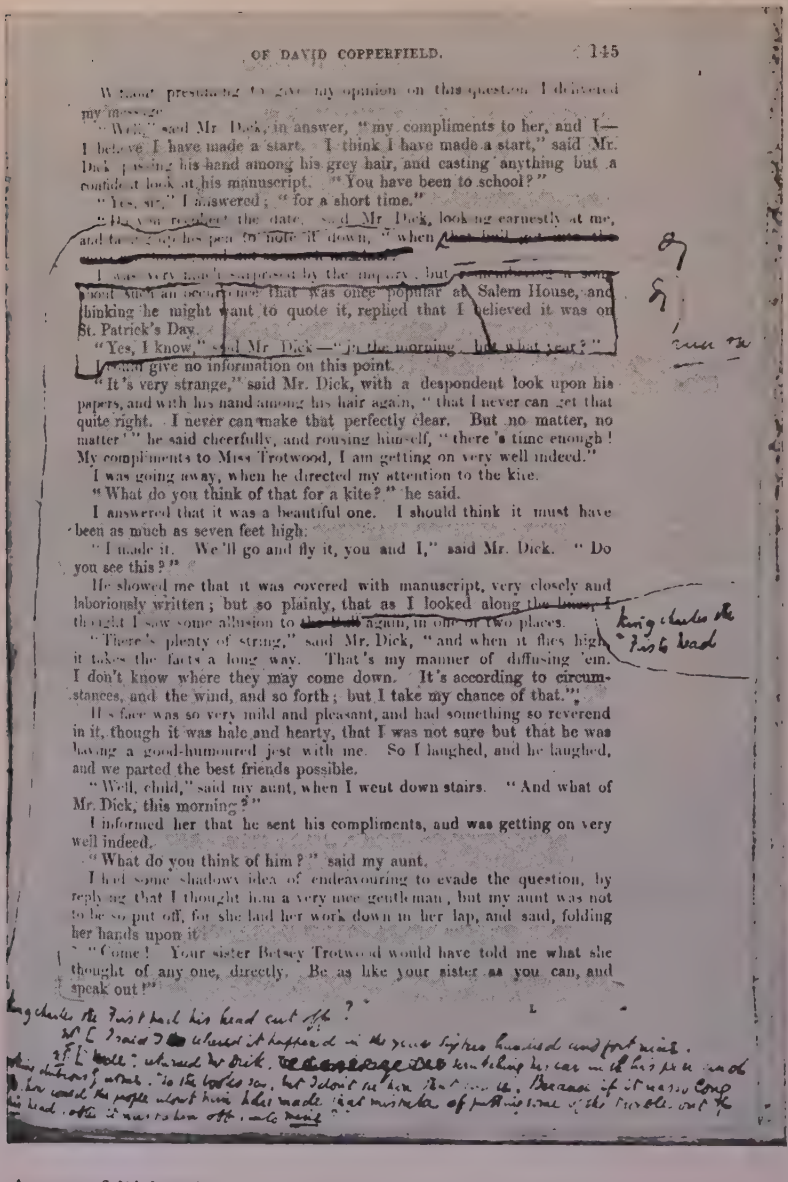
There are two episodes in the book which it is impossible to believe, the first is the unmasking of Uriah Heep by Micawber.

We wish to believe it, it is comforting and pleasant to read about it, but the wicked Heeps in real life are very rarely overthrown by the good Micawbers. How nice if it were otherwise!

The other episode is very different. Why did Dickens send Micawber to Port Middlebay and make him a successful magistrate? No doubt it is due to his passion for a happy ending and to relieve the good man of his troubles, but a successful Micawber is a failure for he ceases to be Micawber. We like to think of him eternally hoping for "something to turn up" his spirits now rising to the fever-heat of expectation, and now falling below the zero of despair.

*David Copperfield* begins as fact and changes to fiction, and some readers will always prefer the fiction, where Dickens can give free rein to his imagination and invention, but whatever our preferences may be, on one point there is complete agreement—*David Copperfield* is a very great book.

# KING CHARLES IN THE CHINA SHOP



OF DAVID COPPERFIELD. 145

without presuming to give my opinion on this question, I delivered my message.

"Well," said Mr. Dick, in answer, "my compliments to her, and I—I believe I have made a start. I think I have made a start," said Mr. Dick, passing his hand among his grey hair, and casting anything but a confident look at his manuscript. "You have been to school?"

"Yes, sir," I answered; "for a short time."

"Do you remember the date," said Mr. Dick, looking earnestly at me, and taking up his pen to note it down, "when [illegible]

I was very much surprised by the inquiry, but [illegible] some such an occurrence that was once popular at Salem House, and thinking he might want to quote it, replied that I believed it was on St. Patrick's Day.

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Dick—"in the morning—but what year?"

I could give no information on this point.

"It's very strange," said Mr. Dick, with a despondent look upon his papers, and with his hand among his hair again, "that I never can get that quite right. I never can make that perfectly clear. But no matter, no matter!" he said cheerfully, and rousing himself, "there's time enough! My compliments to Miss Trotwood, I am getting on very well indeed."

I was going away, when he directed my attention to the kite.

"What do you think of that for a kite?" he said.

I answered that it was a beautiful one. I should think it must have been as much as seven feet high.

"I made it. We'll go and fly it, you and I," said Mr. Dick. "Do you see this?"

He showed me that it was covered with manuscript, very closely and laboriously written; but so plainly, that as I looked along the lines, I thought I saw some allusion to the Bull again, in one or two places.

"There's plenty of string," said Mr. Dick, "and when it flies high it takes the facts a long way. That's my manner of diffusing 'em. I don't know where they may come down. It's according to circumstances, and the wind, and so forth; but I take my chance of that."

His face was so very mild and pleasant, and had something so reverend in it, though it was hale and hearty, that I was not sure but that he was having a good-humoured jest with me. So I laughed, and he laughed, and we parted the best friends possible.

"Well, child," said my aunt, when I went down stairs. "And what of Mr. Dick, this morning?"

I informed her that he sent his compliments, and was getting on very well indeed.

"What do you think of him?" said my aunt.

I had some shadowy idea of endeavouring to evade the question, by replying that I thought him a very nice gentleman, but my aunt was not to be so put off, for she laid her work down in her lap, and said, folding her hands upon it:

"Come! Your sister Betsey Trotwood would have told me what she thought of any one, directly. Be as like your sister as you can, and speak out!"

A page of Dickens's proof corrections of *David Copperfield* showing how Mr. Dick's famous obsession about King Charles's head had replaced the Bull in the China Shop

# WAS DICKENS TIRED?

## OR THE POEM OF MEMORY

By FRANK A. GIBSON

IN the stimulating introduction to *David Copperfield* which Gilbert Chesterton wrote for the *Everyman* edition of Dickens the writer's customary enthusiasm is qualified by a rather curious charge of fatigue. The charge is very carefully brought. Chesterton admits that *Copperfield* is "Dickens's ablest and clearest book . . . . . the best of all Dickens's books," but he says that "there are many marks of something weak and shadowy in its end." Dickens had begun the story under a sudden emotional impulse to tell the whole truth about himself and had then slipped back into another mood, with the result that the earlier part of the book was in his later manner and the later part in his earlier manner. "In the case of *David Copperfield* there is a real reason for noting an air of fatigue."

1 Devonshire Terrace where most of *David Copperfield* was written.

Dickens would undoubtedly have agreed with Chesterton's general estimate of the book. In a letter to Mary Boyle in July, 1852, he said: "To let you into a secret, I am not quite sure that I ever did like or ever shall like anything quite so well as *Copperfield*." But if the earlier part was designed as suggested by Chesterton it was surely rather curious that Dickens should have written to Mark Lemon: "Get a clean pocket-handkerchief ready for the close of *Copperfield* No. 3: 'simple and quiet but very natural and touching.'" No. 3 ended with Peggotty's account of the death of David's mother, and Dickens's words clearly suggest that he was thinking of the similar effect created by the death of Little Nell—not to mention Paul Dombey; in short, of his earlier manner. With this striking example of the early manner in the early part of the book, it is difficult to see how it can be maintained that Dickens was essentially striving after a newer style in that part and then slipping back into his earlier manner.

Dickens's own opinion must also be considered; he wrote to the Revd. James White in July, 1850 (i.e. when he had written over fifteen of the book's twenty numbers): "I am very much interested in it and pleased with it myself. I have carefully planned out the story, for some time past, to the end, and am making out my purposes with great care." There never was a book in which the author felt this planning more completely than Dickens when he wrote, three months after this letter: ". . . . . from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it" [i.e. the final catastrophe] "growing larger and larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain, and throwing its forecast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days." (ch. LV.) It is true that in September, 1850, when he had almost finished the book, Dickens wrote to Lytton that he hoped it contained "some heretofore deficient qualities," but this, demonstrably, did not refer only to the earlier part; and Forster emphatically contradicts the notion of pure autobiography, with which it is alleged Dickens started, when he

writes : " it would be the greatest mistake to imagine anything like a complete identity of the fictitious novelist with the real one," and that " to weave fact with fiction unskilfully would be only to make truth less true."

Though we may be fairly sure that both Dickens and Forster contradict Chesterton's notion, it is not necessary for us to argue with that gifted writer. We may, however, perhaps be excused if, while admitting a modicum of truth in his assertion, we advance our own theory as to his real reason. The fact is that it led up only too well to his amusing remarks on the subject of Micawber and emigration.

## II.

> " Why " (writes Chesterton), " did Dickens at the end of this book give way to that typically English optimism about emigration ? He seems to think that he can cure the souls of a whole cartload, or rather boatload, of his characters by sending them all to the colonies . . . . . Colonising is not talked of merely as a coarse, economic expedient for going to a new market. It is really offered as something that will cure the hopeless tragedy of Peggotty ; as something that will cure the still more hopeless comedy of Micawber."

The answer is, of course, that Dickens did not regard them as hopeless. Chesterton apparently thought that the successful author, David Copperfield, should have set his teeth and magnanimously embarked upon a whole lifetime of eccentric adventures with his friends ; Dickens took another view : he liked these old friends so much—with the book's conclusion he wrote that he seemed to be saying goodbye to part of himself—that he honestly hoped to give them a new start in a new world. It was no mere afterthought in a final chapter ; Micawber's emigration is planned and settled before the catastrophe of the storm. Whether Dickens was over-optimistic about Micawber's career in Australia is another matter. Those were early days, in which optimism was perhaps more general ; but to suggest that Dickens was lamely getting rid of his characters by shipping them to Australia is untrue ; it was untrue of his own son.

It was, too, a curious kind of " fatigue " which led Dickens to write in his preface to the completed volume : " It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two years' imaginative task ; or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever."

## III.

The question whether Micawber should have done so well in Australia, while requiring no prefatory allegation of fatigue is no doubt a real one, and has been more or less seriously tackled in the book entitled " Mr. Chippendale of Port Welcome " by Charles Fellows (Hutchinson), reviewed by J. W. T. Ley in *The Dickensian* for August, 1905. The author asks " Did the character of Mr. Micawber, or the nature of things, change simply because he set foot in Australia ? " Apparently he denies that anything ever could turn up for Micawber—which is really too bad. Of course the Australians would have taken him to their hearts. Wilkins Micawber, newspaper correspondent, leader-writer, magistrate, with illustrious connections in the Old Country, would have been too good an opportunity to miss. Indeed, there is very little doubt that, but for Miss Trotwood's (and Dickens's) kind arrangements, he would have done exactly the same thing in the less inspiriting atmosphere of England. But that would have left two Micawbers in England—which is obviously absurd. Dickens must have felt that one Micawber at a time was enough for any country.

But what has all that to do with the fantastic allegation of Dickens being so tired of his old friends that he shipped them away to the Antipodes ?

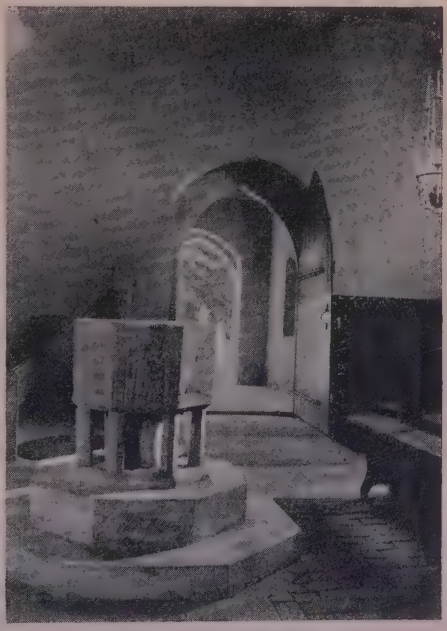
The fact is that it was Dickens's phenomenal energy which led to the only real and well-founded suspicion of his weariness. When in John Gibson Lockhart's *Quarterly Review* the youthful Boz was warned in no unfriendly way that if he were not careful, having gone up like the rocket, he would come down like the stick, it was because the reviewer saw the obvious fact that Dickens was not only writing much better than any other man but much more. His fears, if not groundless, were not justified by events, but he was not to know that. Dickens himself took up this joke of his fatigue with gusto a good many years later, when, as one of the two " idle apprentices " he set off on a lazy tour with Wilkie Collins. His own " idleness " on that tour took the usual form of almost superhuman activity, beginning with the dragging of the plethoric Collins up a fog-bound height, with the prime result that he had to attempt to carry him down again. The final result was that Dickens wrote the major and by far the best part of the Christmas number in which they were supposed to be collaborating.

## IV.

There is one very sure fact, that if this esoteric fatigue ever had any real foundation it has never been shared by the readers of *Copperfield*, which is one of the world's most re-read books. The distinguished French savant who writes under the pen-name " Alain " is thinking of Dickens and *Copperfield* when he writes (in his book *En lisant Dickens*) : " For my part I have re-read my favourite novels dozens of times, and so far from being bored by anticipation I derive very special pleasure from these repeated readings. I know where I am going. The story develops before me ; often I find all too short the passage which I know."

> My pleasure in re-reading *Copperfield* depends chiefly on touches which announce a drama of incomparable grandeur. For instance, when Little Emily runs upon the jagged timber David asks himself if it would not have been better if she had fallen into the water and been drowned. And at once I see the scene of the raging ocean and the rescue of Steerforth by Ham, his rival . . . . . the drama begins."

And of the discussed emigration Alain says : " The emigrants themselves are the memories which depart." In the narration of Copperfield, Alain sees the perfection of form of the true poem. He finely concludes that " this justly celebrated novel is the poem of memory."



Blundeston Church, Suffolk

# ROSA DARTLE WANTS TO KNOW:

*The answers may be found on page* 128.

1. How often was David in love before he met Dora and with whom ?
2. What was the full name of " the dearest girl in the world " ?
3. What calling did Mr. Creakle follow *before* he became a schoolmaster and after he retired ?
4. Who spoke of whom as a morsel of English grammar ?
5. Why had there been " no communication " between the Misses Spenlow and their brother for many years ?
6. What profession did Mr. Dick suggest David should adopt ?
7. Who is described as " being a little dilapidated like a house with having been so long to let " ?
8. Who " had such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else " ?
9. What was the name of (*a*) Miss Mowcher's Great Grandfather, (*b*) the Orfling ?
10. Who was " as respectable a mystery as any Pyramid " ?
11. Why did David and Betsey Trotwood pause at the toy shop in Fleet Street ?
12. Who wore " a stiff brown wig that looked as if it were made of gingerbread " ?
13. What property of David's was advertised for sale at fifteen guineas and eventually raffled at 2/6 a head ?
14. Who was " the old Soldier " and why was the name given ?
15. What did David believe to have been Mr. Micawber's early profession ?
16. At whose shop was David well known and how did he assist in the education of the principal gentleman ?
17. Who was (*a*) the " middle-aged gentleman who only needed a black nose to be the portrait of a pug dog," (*b*) " the very awful lady in black velvet looking like a near relation of Hamlet, say his Aunt " ?
18. Who was the boy at Creakles school nicknamed " Exchange or Barter " ? Why was he so called ?
19. What was " the one great outrage of Betsey Trotwood's life demanding to be constantly avenged " ?
20. Who married " a growling old Scotch Croesus with great flaps of ears " ?
21. Who was Mr. Dolloboy ?
22. Who were prisoners 27 and 28 in " the Model Prison " ?
23. Whither did Dr. Chillip remove from Blunderstone ?
24. Who were " a perfect nest of roses " ?

JANE BACON.

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THE DICKENS ANCESTRY
AND
THE BOOKS THAT DICKENS READ
WILL BE CONCLUDED IN SEPTEMBER

# THE "ORIGINALS"

By KENTLEY BROMHILL

THE number of the so-called "originals" of the characters in *David Copperfield* which have been identified or claimed to have been identified is remarkable and may be an indication of the novel's autobiographical nature. Just look at the list. Rosa Dartle's habit of asking questions is taken, says Forster, from a lady known to both him and Dickens (I should not call that a portrait); Creakle is said to be Dickens's schoolmaster at Wellington House Academy, but I imagine that here again it was only the love of chastising boys that is reproduced, and that Mr. Jones of Dickens's school was not such a Squeers-like character; Traddles is supposed to reproduce Sergeant Talfourd, but only for his amiability for had it been a real portrait Traddles would have turned out much more successful in his career; Barkis is said to owe his name to a carrier at Yarmouth named Barker, but surely it is only his name, for the immortal Barkis is *sui generis*; Mr. Mell is honoured with two originals, one being Oliver Goldsmith and the other a teacher at Wellington House Academy, but in either case the only connexion seems to be the capacity to play the flute, which seems to me to be silly; Steerforth is, according to Langton, a boy who lived next door to the Dickenses at Chatham, but it passes my comprehension how Dickens at the age of ten could foresee a heartless seducer in the future, and if the ascription is true it is one of the cruellest things I know; for Agnes two originals have been found, Mary Hogarth and her sister Georgina, and I don't mind which is chosen as I cannot think that Mary who died at seventeen had had time to shew any of Agnes's qualities, and although Georgina was an excellent housekeeper that would not be sufficient to make her an Agnes.

Mrs. Seymour Hill, the original of Miss Mowcher, from *The Town*, November, 1838.

I must, in justice, admit that there are six plausible "originals" in the book, even if one of them is a dog, for Jip is said to have been suggested by Maria Beadnell's pet dog Daphne. Dora herself is generally accepted as having been founded upon Maria Beadnell. Indeed in a letter written to her, long after she had married someone else, Dickens wrote to her of *David Copperfield*: "perhaps you have once or twice laid down that book, and thought, 'How dearly that boy must have loved me, and how vividly this man remembers it!'" Betsey Trotwood lived, on the authority of Charles Dickens the Younger, in the person of Mary Pearson Strong at Broadstairs, where she assiduously chased donkeys from her front lawn. We have Dickens's own

authority in his "Fragment of Autobiography" for knowing that Captain Hopkins in the King's Bench Prison is really the Captain Hopkins of the Marshalsea when John Dickens was confined there. Miss Mowcher so closely resembled Mrs. Seymour Hill, a " corn-operator " of 6 York Gate, Regent's Park, that he had to apologise and then to modify the character in the story.

Then we come to the greatest case of all and the character who towers over everyone in the book : Mr. Micawber. Yet, even in this case the resemblances are the mannerisms and qualities rather than the physical make-up, for whereas Micawber had " no more hair upon his head (which was a large one and very shiny) than there is upon an egg," a bust of John Dickens in the Dickens Museum shews him with a goodly crop of hair, and a pen-portrait of him says he was a " fat little man trying to catch the unforgiving moment rather than the majesty of Micawber waiting for something to turn up." And I certainly cannot see in my mind's eye John Dickens, with his pretensions to gentility, seated on the top of a coach " eating walnuts out of a paper bag (and doubtless throwing the shells over the side) with a bottle sticking out of his pocket."

On the whole I incline to the opinion that the search for " originals," amusing as it may be, can be carried too far, and that instead of any of Dickens's characters being reproductions of " originals " they should rather be considered as only having mannerisms, characteristics and qualities observed in certain real people and grafted on to figments of the imagination that are mostly quite unlike the persons observed. Otherwise we should deny any originality or creative power to Dickens's genius.

## ANSWERS TO ROSA DARTLE'S QUESTIONS.

(*See page* 160)

1. Three times. Little Em'ly, Chap. III. Miss Shepherd, Chap. XVIII. The eldest Miss Larkins, Chap. XVIII.
2. Sophy Crewler, Chap. XLI.
3. A small Hop Dealer in the Borough, Chap. VI. A Middlesex Magistrate, Chap. LXI.
4. Peggotty in speaking of her nephew 'Am., Chap. II.
5. Because they had been invited to tea instead of to dinner on the occasion of Dora's christening, Chap. XXXVIII.
6. A " Brazier," Chap. XIX.
7. Rosa Dartle, Chap. XX.
8. Mary Anne's cousin in the Life Guards, Chap. XLIV.
9. (*a*) Walker, Chap. XXII. (*b*) Clickett, Chap. XI.
10. Littimer, Chap. XXIII.
11. To see " the giants at St. Dunstan's strike upon the bells," Chap. XXIII.
12. Tiffey, clerk to Spenlow and Jorkins, Chap. XXIII.
13. The caul with which he was born, Chap. I.
14. Mrs. Markleham—Mrs. Strong's mother—so called on account of her marshalling great forces of relations against the Doctor, Chap. XVI.
15. An officer in the Marines, Chap. XI.
16. The pawnbroker's for whose " principal gentleman " he often declined a Latin noun or adjective, or conjugated a Latin verb, Chap. XI.
17. (*a*) Mr. Waterbrook. (*b*) Mrs. Henry Spiker, Chap. XXV.
18. A coal merchant's son whose education was " a set off against the coal bill," Chap. VI.
19. The passage of a donkey across the green in front of her house, Chap. XIII.
20. Julia Mills, Chap. LXIV.
21. The second-hand clothes dealer who bought David's waistcoat for 9d. Chap. XIII.
22. Uriah Heep, Littimer, Chap. LXI.
23. Within a few miles of Bury St. Edmund's, Chap. LIX.
24. Traddles's sisters-in-law.—Caroline, Louisa, Sarah, Margaret and Lucy, Chap. LIX.

# NOTES ON *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY*

By T. W. HILL

(*Continued from page* 102)

## Chapter X

1. WICKER BASKETS. Before the days of the ubiquitous attache case the travelling salesmen and women, who visited the villages with millinery and haberdashery carried their wares in wicker baskets lined and often divided into compartments for the accommodation of the many articles they dispensed. The baskets had covers of oil-cloth with overlapping edges to keep out wet or dust.

2. CABINET PIANO. An upright pianoforte about six feet high, over the front of which was stretched pleated silk drawn to a centre point often decorated with a tiny lyre in silver or brass. It was introduced about 1807 and was very popular until soon after 1840 it was superseded by the Cottage pianoforte.

3. NINE TO NINE. Including Saturdays (See Chapter XIX). These hours give some idea of the strain of workrooms of the period. "The usual hour at which dress-makers' assistants commence their labours is seven in the morning, and that at which they close for the day is eleven at night. . . On urgent occasions such as a drawing-room, a ball . . . it was near midnight on the second night of working, when they should have been sleeping, and they are to sit through the whole of this night and next day, making three days and two nights of incessant sewing." ("Lights and Shadows of London Life." 1842.) Ralph had already warned Kate that she would be at Madame's "from morning till night—occasionally perhaps till morning again."

4. FIVE TO SEVEN SHILLINGS. This shocking rate of pay is corroborated by the book from which the above extract is taken. And Kate Nickleby was only fourteen.

## Chapter XI

1. GOG AND MAGOG. The two huge images, over fourteen feet high, of London's tutelary dieties in Guildhall. They were destroyed, with Guildhall, in a fire resulting from a German air-raid in 1941.

2. COACH. All hired vehicles (what we should call cabs) were at that time commonly known as coaches or hackney-coaches.

3. SWALLOW'S CHAISE. Swallow is a thin disguise for the name of Mr. Martin, the actual name of the innkeeper of the George and New Inn at Greta Bridge in 1838.

4. FEASTED HIS EYES. This must be figurative, as Squeers had only one.

5. EYES STARTING OUT. The eyes cannot move forwards or "start out" of their sockets, but through fright or amazement the lids may, by nervous reaction, open widely and render the eye-balls more prominent; this condition has no relation with the prominence of the eyes associated with Graves's disease (a form of goitre).

6. THIS TWENTY YEARS. If John's memory really went back twenty years (unless it is an exaggeration) he must have been considerably older than Matilda, who was eighteen. (See Chapter IX.)

## Chapter XIV

1. HOP FROM STONE TO STONE. Many of the streets of London were paved entirely with squared stone setts.

2. LARGE BREWERY HARD BY. One of the streets running out of Golden Square is still called Brewer Street, commemorating, no doubt, the brewery mentioned.

3. A CALCULATING BOY. Children with abnormal powers of arithmetical calculation appear from time to time in history, and many of them have exhibited their powers in public. Perhaps the boy in Dickens's mind when he was writing this book was George Parker Bidder (1806-1878) who rose to

some eminence as an engineer in later life, or Zerah Colburn (1804-1840) who in later life became a Professor of Languages in an American University. The names of other mathematical prodigies are given in Kirby's Museum, 1803-20.

4. IVORY TURNER. This reflects the time when craftsmen lived near their work, and trades tended to concentrate in certain neighbourhoods. The West End shopping centres where articles of luxury, such as billiard tables, ivory-turned chess sets, draughts, etc., were sold, would naturally attract the skilled artisans to the district.

5. PARTY WAS ADMIRABLY SELECTED. There were seventeen in all, including Mr. and Mrs. Kenwigs, crowded into two rooms (the entire suite) and four of the five children ; it must have been a tight fit. The composition of the party is worth tabulating :

Water-rate collector.
Dress-maker.
Bachelor friend of Mr. Kenwigs.
Newly-married couple.
Lady from back parlour.
Mrs. Kenwigs's sister.
Admirer of Mrs. Kenwigs's sister.
Daughter of theatrical fireman.
Newman Noggs.
Mr. Crowl.

6. AN AUTHOR WHO KNEW HIS PLACE. Dickens was ever on the watch for anything of a slighting character against the literary profession, for the dignity of which he was very jealous.

7. *Programme.* This word is printed in italics, shewing that at that period it was not quite acclimatised as an English word.

## CHAPTER XV

1. SUCKED THE BABY'S BREATH. Cats have always shewn a liking for sitting for warmth and comfort in babies' cots, whether the cots were occupied or not. Babies have been known to be found dead and the popular superstition was that the cat "had sucked the baby's breath," whereas the truth was that probably the animal may have settled on the sleeping baby's face and so suffocated it.

## CHAPTER XVI

1. FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT. This common saying has been traced back, in various forms, to classical times. In Livy, XXXV, 10, occurs this passage : "Assiduus in oculis hominum, quæ res minus verendos magnos homines ipsa satietate facit." This is translated by Professor E. T. Sage : "There was also the fact that the other had been constantly in the public eye, a fact which renders prominent men less venerated from sheer surfeit of seeing them."

2. CAPITAL TEXT. Text-hand is a particular kind of handwriting of a large form, so called from the practice of printing the text of a book in large type, the comment being in smaller type. Capital text was still larger and was much used in "copy-books."

3. SHEPHERD'S-PLAID BOOTS. Shepherd's-plaid was a woven woollen cloth almost impervious to rain : boots, without heels, made of this material were fashionable in the fifties.

4. LITTLE BETHEL CONGREGATION. Beth-el ("House of God") was a name often bestowed by extreme non-conformists on their places of worship. Dickens shews dislike to them probably on account of the narrowness of the outlook of their habitual users. His description of the Little Bethel in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Chapter XLI) is quite outstanding in its graphic details.

5. MANCHESTER BUILDINGS. A short street that stood on the site now occupied by the Westminster Station on the Underground Railway, almost adjoining Westminster Bridge.

6. IN QUEST OF FRANKS. Frank (free) was the term applied to the signature placed at the bottom left-hand corner of a letter-envelope, entitling it to go through the post unstamped. The privilege of franking correspondence was enjoyed by all Members of Parliament until 1840, when the Act establishing Penny Postage abolished it.

7. GAMMON IS UNKNOWN TO ME. "A hit, a palpable hit." Of course, a politician like Gregsbury would not know the meaning of gammon (humbug), and he shews it in the very next sentence.

8. POOR GRUBBING DEVILS OF AUTHORS. An instance of Dickens's sensitiveness for the dignity of authorship. See also Chapter XIV: "If he had been an author who knew his place, he could not have been more humble."

9. FIFTEEN SHILLINGS A WEEK. This seems a paltry wage but it was quite customary for inferior clerical work at that period; equal to about forty-five shillings in modern currency. It will be remembered that Scrooge paid Bob Cratchit "on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name."

10. ITALIAN IRON. A short polished steel tube, into which could be inserted a red-hot small poker, mounted on a slender leg. It was used for ironing frills. It seems a rather fanciful description for the baby's toy horse.

11. RED WAFERS SET IN BLACKING. The red wafers were, of course, the little circular bits of coloured paste used for fastening envelopes before the introduction of adhesive gum.

12. IT'S THE WAR-TIME I SPEAK OF: THE LAST WAR. The Napoleonic wars had closed about twenty years before the time treated of in the book; so Mr. Lillyvick must have been about fifty years of age—"a short old gentleman."

## CHAPTER XVII

1. POOR WORM. That is, a silk-worm, which is properly not a worm but a larva or maggot.

2. BEFORE THE APPOINTED HOUR. If Kate left her home in Thames Street at a quarter before eight she would have to walk at good pace to cover the three miles to Cavendish Square and arrive there before nine.

3. TRUST THEM AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE THEM. An early form of this saying and its variants is to be found in "The True Tragedy of Richard the Third" (1594): "Ile trust neuer a Duke in the world farther than I can see him."

4. STREET CORNER. Mrs. Nickleby must have walked all the way from Thames Street and after meeting Kate had to walk back the same distance; they could not have reached home before ten o'clock.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1. SNUFFED. Note the play on the word.

2. PAST TEN . . . CLOSE THE WAREHOUSE. Shops were kept open until any hour convenient to the owner, until the first Early Closing Act was passed in 1886. The writer, in his early youth, has often made purchases after ten o'clock at night.

3. HARTSHORN, VINEGAR. The antlers of the hart (Red Deer) when submitted to dry distillation yield ammonia and volatile bases, known to the old pharmacy as Oil of Hartshorn, volatile salt of hartshorn, spirits of hartshorn, etc. It was used as a remedy for nervous headache, and is now replaced by sal volatile (aromatic spirits of ammonia).

## CHAPTER XIX

1. JOINED HER MOTHER AS USUAL. Mrs. Nickleby had walked every evening of the week from Thames Street to Cavendish Square and back. There is no mention of weather, so one can only conclude that it was dry and clear.

2. RATS AND MICE AND SUCH SMALL GEAR. If this is a deliberate quotation Dickens's memory lapsed for once. The correct version is:

> "But mice, and rats, and such small deer
> Have been Tom's food for seven long year."
>
> ("King Lear," Act III, Sc. 4.)

3. UNHAND ME. At one time quite customary and current, "unhand" has become stilted and obsolete, except in the stylised diction of melodrama. Shakespeare used it in a quite natural way:

> "Still I am called; unhand me, gentlemen."
>
> ("Hamlet," Act I, Sc. 4.)

## Chapter XX

1. MAGDALEN HOSPITAL. One of several charitable institutions situated in St. George's Fields (now Blackfriars Road). It was founded in 1758 by Jonas Hanway, the prison reformer, in Goodman's Fields near Whitechapel, and removed to St. George's Fields in 1769 where it remained till 1869, when it was removed again to Streatham and some years later migrated further into the country at Ottershaw, Surrey. An interesting point is, how did Mrs. Nickleby, who had lived in Devonshire and had been in London only a few weeks, know of its existence.

## Chapter XXI

1. COVERTURE. In law, the state of a married woman who cannot enter into any contract without the authority of her husband. It is surprising that Dickens should have used this word; was Mrs. Nickleby, who had hounded her husband into ruinous speculation with her dower, ever "under his authority"?

2. MANTIE. Familiar and uneducated for mantua. (cf. the modern hankie, panties, undies, etc.)

3. NEW ROAD. This probably refers to Brompton Road which had recently been made to connect Knightsbridge with Old Brompton Road; the houses were not built till about 1840. The whole of this paragraph is a discerning description of the anomalous situation of Cadogan Place.

4. SIAMESE TWINS. A monstrosity of boy twins, named Eng and Chang, born of a Chinese mother in Siam in 1811. Their bodies were joined by a band of flesh stretching from the breast-bone of one twin to the same place on the other. Exhibited in America in 1839; paid two visits to England; were married and had offspring; died within three hours of each other in 1874.

5. HEAD FLOURED OR CHALKED OR PAINTED. A relic of the time of flowing Carolian wigs, which were regularly powdered: there was in every home a powder-closet, a small cupboard in the wall where the wig was kept at night. When wigs ceased to be fashionable, the hair of servants was often dressed with white powder (very often common chalk).

6. TWO-PAIR BACK . . . OR THREE-PAIR FRONT. Mrs. Nickleby's aspirations, although not exorbitant, were for comfort for herself in her daughter's house.

## Chapter XXII

1. OFFICIAL WATCHER OF THE NIGHT. The system of night-watchmen in towns was introduced in Henry III's reign (1253). Their inefficiency was proverbial, as they were often elderly men clad in great-coats of huge proportions, and as guardians were quite incompetent, in spite of some improvement introduced by Charles I (hence their nickname "Charlies"). They were abolished by Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1829 when the Police Force was formed (hence the Cockney names for the police of "Bobbies" and "Peelers").

2. DEVIL'S PUNCH BOWL. "Near Hindhead on the Portsmouth Road." In 1786 an unknown sailor was murdered here and is commemorated on a headstone. The murderers were hanged on the scene of their crime and the place of execution is known as Gibbet Hill. Nicholas and Smike used the old coach road, now only a track, to Portsmouth, beside which stood the stone referred to. Its main inscription reads:

"Erected
In detestation of a barbarous Murder
Committed here on an unknown Sailor
On Sept. 24th, 1786,
By Edwd. Lonegon, Michl. Casey & Jas. Marshall,
Who were taken the same day
And hung in Chains near this Place."

When the new, present, road was constructed at a lower level, the stone was removed to its present position by the side of the road, in spite of the curse invoked by the inscription on "the man who injureth or removeth this stone."

*To be continued.*

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## JOHN JOBLING, Esquire, M.R.C.S.

SIR,

In the Notes to *Martin Chuzzlewit* (*The Dickensian*, 1947, p. 28) there is one on "The Hall and College" whose diplomas were held by John Jobling. Dr. A. G. M. Severn, M.O.H., Pontypridd, has pointed out that the Note is full of error, and through the kind intervention of Mr. T. B. Layton, F.R.C.S., I have received from Mr. Kennedy Cassels, the Secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons, the following communication which, while correcting the Note, possesses an interest of its own that will be shared by the general reader.

"In 1745 the surgeons separated themselves from the Barber-Surgeons just as the apothecaries had from the Grocers just over a hundred years previously. They used the Hall of the Stationers till 1751 when their own Hall and Theatre was ready. They used alternately the title 'Company' and 'Corporation' and moved from what was known as Surgeon's Hall at the end of 1796 holding their October meeting of that year 'in the theatre' and that of January, 1797, in the 'Company's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields.'

"In 1800 they became the Royal College of Surgeons in London and the diploma of M.R.C.S. was instituted. In 1843 we became the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the higher diploma of F.R.C.S. was added.

"In those days the Physicians, in addition to having Fellows and Members, also issued a licence (L.R.C.P.) which was very seldom taken and then apparently only by those who wanted to specialise in Medicine as distinct from Surgery or practising as an Apothecary.

"There never was, and is not, a Conjoint Diploma. In the 'eighties a conjoint examining board, with conjoint examinations was instituted for the two diplomas, M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. for those who commenced professional study in or after 1884; and the first examination was held in 1887. The candidate who passed this was given both these diplomas by the two colleges separately. This still takes place. It was not until the formation of this Conjoint Board that any number of men took the L.R.C.P.

"It is quite clear that when Jobling said 'we study for that; we pass the Hall and the College' he was referring to the two Examinations for the L.S.A. and M.R.C.S.; and not to Buildings. The word is still in common use in this sense, although in colloquial talk it may be commoner for the speaker to say 'get through' and to use the term 'Take' instead of 'go up for' the exam.

"Nor is there any discrepancey on Dickens's part when a few lines later the doctor refers to himself as being described as 'John Jobling Esquire M.R.C.S.' This was considered as something better than the L.S.A. and when he had taken it he would not use the latter letters: just as a man who to-day takes his F.R.C.S. might not use the L.R.C.P. and would not use the B.S. of the University degrees M.B., B.S.

"There is an interesting confirmation of this in the first edition of the Medical Directory. It included the names and addresses only and the university degree or the diploma held by a letter, thus S. for M.R.C.S., and A. for L.S.A.

"My grandfather, Dr. Charles Taylor of Clapham Rise, is entered as S; although he had both. Some years later when the directory had expanded it is all there, L.S.A. 1838 and M.R.C.S. 1838.

"It is important to remember that *Martin Chuzzlewit* was written 15 years before the Register was drawn up in 1858. Anyone could practice as a doctor without study for examinations; just as when I was a boy my maiden aunts used to send their cats 'to the vet.' for various reasons, and he was a retired coachman living in his own cottage and making much more as a 'Vet.' than ever he could as a coachman; while being as well thought of as the M.R.C.V.S. with whom he was competing.

"This makes all the more important Jobling's 'We study for that; we pass the Hall and the College for that; and we take our station in society by that.' No medical man needs to say that since there has been a register."

T. W. HILL.

# THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

*Branch Reports of not more than 200 words are invited for inclusion on this page. Press cuttings are not acceptable*

## LOS ANGELES

The Los Angeles Branch is enjoying a prosperous season under the presidency of Mrs. Alice Warren Hamaker. Meetings are held on the third Sunday afternoon of the month, and tea is served at the close of the programme. To celebrate Dickens's birthday, the branch combined to give a joint dinner with the California Pickwick Club (Branch 131) and the Charles Dickens Club of Hollywood. Attendance was 110. The speakers were Mr. Robert H. Hadow, British Consul-General, and Mr. John Moore, literary critic. The toast to the Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens was proposed by Dr. Lionel Stevenson, past president of the branch. Mr. C. Montagu Shaw, a noted Shakespearian actor, read the trial scene from *Pickwick*, and music was provided by Miss Bessie Irene Chapin (violinist), Miss Lillias Gilbert (violinist), and the Hadyn string quartette. Mr. Martin Behrens was a gracious master of ceremonies. L. S.

## MANCHESTER

The Manchester Branch is completing a very successful season under the Presidency of Mr. J. H. Moffett. Twenty-one new members have joined during the year and the membership now totals 147. The syllabus included two evenings of short papers by members and numerous recitals, readings from Dickens's works, a lively debate " That Dickens's lack of academic education was a handicap," a dramatic presentation of " Bardell *v.* Pickwick," and a very welcome visit from Mr. Leo Mason of Blackburn who gave a fascinating selection of readings with his own " relevant remarks." A summer outing to Samlesbury Hall, where we were joined by members of the Blackburn Branch, and a visit to the film *Oliver Twist*, at its first production in the Manchester district, were enjoyed by large parties. The annual " Dingley Dell " party was attended by 112 members and friends and the company at the Birthday Dinner numbered 100, including guests from Blackburn, Liverpool, Lytham-St. Annes, Preston and Edmonton, Alberta. The Branch has been represented at the opening meeting of the season in London and at the London Birthday Dinner. Members have also attended Birthday Celebrations at Blackpool, Liverpool and Lytham-St. Annes. Members continue to be responsible for the work of the Hospital Libraries Service in one of the city's general hospitals, where approximately 1,650 books have been issued to patients during the year. The Branch is to play host to the North-West Regional Group Conference on 30th April. M. P.

* * * * *

Congratulations to the following newly appointed Hon. Secretaries : Mrs. L. Bannister, Sydney ; Mrs. Allott, Christchurch, and Mr. Vann, Redditch. The thanks of the entire Fellowship are offered to the retiring officers, Miss F. E. Tweedie, Miss E. M. Clague and Mr. Alex. F. Payne respectively.

* * * * *

A warm welcome is offered to Mrs. Muriel Metherell who is visiting England from Auckland, New Zealand.

* * * * *

Congratulations to Mr. Frank S. Johnson and Miss Muriel H. Gravatt, who were married at Southwark Cathedral on February 28th.

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## OBITUARY

With deep regret we record the death of Col. A. H. Burn which took place on February 24th. Although he had been among us for only a comparatively short time, Col. Burn had impressed everyone with his sterling qualities. He was a most regular attendant at meetings and in committee and the time was being confidently anticipated when he would take an ever larger share in our activities. After a distinguished career in the Indian Army he concerned himself with antiquarian pursuits and assisted in excavations in Syria and Mesopotamia. Latterly he had worked in the Roman rooms at the British Museum. In addition, he served on the Paddington Borough Council and several of its committees.

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Wed., June 8—On the eve of the 79th Anniversary of the death of Dickens, a wreath will be laid on the grave in Westminster Abbey. Meet at the West Door at 6 p.m.

Sat., June 18—River excursion to Henley by private launch. Leave Paddington at 9-20 a.m. Tickets, 27*s.* 6*d.* inclusive.

Sat., July 16—Visit to Hatfield. Leave King's Cross Station, 1-50 p.m.

Thu., Aug. 18—Downstream with *Our Mutual Friend* by private launch. Leave Westminster Pier at 7 p.m. Tickets, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Sat., Sept. 17—Visit to Petersham and Twickenham. Meet Dysart Arms, Petersham, at 2-30 p.m., reached by 65 'bus from Richmond Station.

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